

**STUDIES IN GERMAN  
LITERATURE**

**RICHARD HOCHDOERFER**

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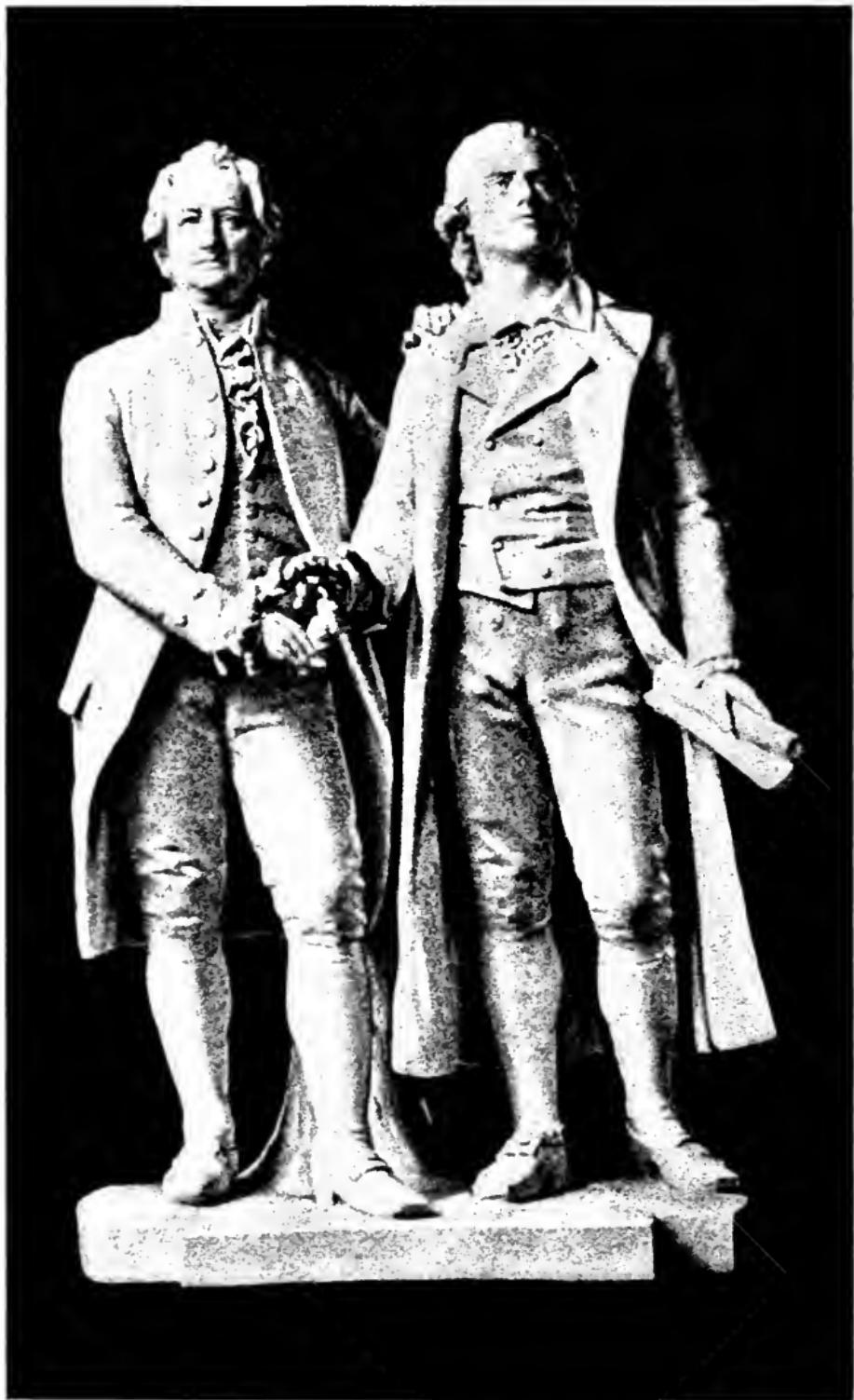
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SCHILLER-GOETHE MONUMENT, WEIMAR

# Introductory Studies in German Literature

BY

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## PREFACE

The aim of the volume in hand is to awaken an interest in German literature, and to serve as a convenient basis for further work in this great subject. An analysis of literary masterpieces with some critical comments, and a short sketch of the respective authors seemed best fitted to bring about the desired result. The books consulted, histories of literature, bibliographies of authors, and translations of their works, are accessible in any well-stocked library, or can be easily procured. If these "Introductory Studies in German Literature" should induce students to systematically read in English translation the works of German poets, to study their lives in leading biographies, or to peruse more comprehensive works on German literature and life, this book has fulfilled its mission. Though presupposing no knowledge of German, the author would like to think of these studies as an incentive to acquire the language.

The part of the introduction dealing with the sources of Luther's language is based upon "Martin Luther in Sprache und Dichtung," by A. Freybe. I am especially indebted to him for the comparison of the earlier edition of Luther's Bible of 1524, with the later of 1532, as illustrated by verses 25 and 26 of the 73d psalm. Some portions of the conclusion were included in a paper (using the critical comments of Paul Schlenther, Adalbert von Hanstein, U. C. Wörner, Edgar Steiger, Paul Mahn, a. o.)

which, in 1901, I read before the Modern Language Association of Ohio.

I take pleasure in acknowledging my great personal obligation to my wife, without whose most efficient help it would have been impossible to issue this book in the limited time allotted to its composition. My thanks are also due to my colleague, Mr. Philip Schneider, Ph. D. and Fellow of Johns Hopkins University, for his kind assistance in reading the proof-sheets, and valuable suggestions.

RICHARD HOCHDOERFER.

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO,

May, 1904.



FRIEDRICH GOTTLIEB KLOPSTOCK:



MARTIN LUTHER,



CHRISTOPHER MARTIN WIELAND.



# INTRODUCTORY STUDIES IN GERMAN LITERATURE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Recently I heard a lady say that she had made a thorough study of Kant, and found him very interesting. Upon being asked by a scholarly gentleman of the party whether she did not find it at times difficult to understand the philosopher, she readily replied in the negative. A closer inquiry disclosed the fact that the two speakers had a rather different conception. What the lady meant by "study of Kant" was the reading of the story of his life with all its interesting details; what the gentleman had in mind was the study of the works of the great philosopher. One had studied history, the other philosophy. You may acquire from a man's writings a clear insight into his way of thinking, you may understand his conception of life and his interpretation of the meaning of the riddle of the universe without ever knowing anything about the man's history and his relations to his fellow-men in the common walk of life. You may, on the other hand, know all the facts of his life, its joys and sorrows, without any deeper insight into the man's thought. Again, you may know something about both his life and

his writings. After perusing the biography of a great thinker, you would wish to learn something about the form and substance of his thought; or vice versa, if chance has led you first to the work of a philosophical mind stirring your own thought, you would like to learn something about the man from whom you received this beneficent stimulus. You are not satisfied with a speaking acquaintance, you ardently wish to know the man, his history, and his work, to make him a friend with whom you discuss the great issues of life. The conversation referred to was about Kant, the philosopher. Its lesson applies equally well to men that make literature. If anything, here the combination of the two branches of study is still more desirable, not to say mandatory. Literature is the expression of life as seen by the individual writer. It is a natural deduction that in order to fully understand a work of literary art, you have to know the artist and the circumstances which gave rise and shape to his mental production. A writer is a product of the people to which he was born. He is a child of his age. What he reflects is the life of his time. It is for this reason that there is no better way to study the mind of a nation and its contribution to human civilization than through a study of its writers and writings. Unfortunate is the time that has not found expression in literature and art. Such periods, if not blanks on the pages of history, are lacking in those features which appeal to and compel the sympathy of men. A period of a nation's life is ultimately weighed by the thought which it adds to the accumulated stock of human thought, by its aid in the progress of mankind. It is not easy to determine, while examining a literary work of wide range of vision, what is the contribution of the writer's

faculty, what that of his time, of his nation, of his race. It is not possible to mathematically and chemically analyze what elements entered into a man's composition to make him what he is, or seems to be. Absolute truth in this research is as unattainable as in other fields of human investigation. Nevertheless, it is a search that never will be abandoned. If it is true that the natural and most fruitful and interesting study of man is man, this is especially true of that man who by the promptings of a rich and overflowing soul is compelled to give to his fellow-beings his inner self. The sufferings of mankind and its tears, its smiles, and its laughter are revealed in the poet's works. A type of his nation, he becomes in his masterpieces a type of humanity. Thus the real poet is (as implied in the word) a maker, a creator, not merely a seer and a prophet, but a ruler of destiny.

The masterpieces of German master minds presented in this book mirror German thought and life. Aside from their national value, however, each of the literary gems held up before the eyes of the reader has an additional luster. There is none among these productions the influence of which has not extended beyond the narrow boundaries of the fatherland. This could not be otherwise. The spirit of cosmopolitan broadness in German ideals compels recognition from other nations. The recent fiftieth convocation of the University of Chicago gave fitting expression to this sentiment. President Harper, in his address of welcome to the distinguished German guests, declared it to be the function of the university "to lead the souls of men and nations into close communion with the common soul of all humanity." These words may also be applied as stating the chief mission of Germany.

Her message to the world is expressed in the German poet, thinker, and scholar.

The literary works selected for interpretation in this volume lie all within the last hundred and fifty years. The noble efforts of the past are, to a great extent, embodied and crowned in the golden age of the German Classics (as they have been termed in a more especial sense) and their successors. But to account for the prevailing principles, for the ruling ideas and tendencies of the present Germany, it is often needful to go farther back than the second half of the eighteenth century. Wherever such a need was apparent, an attempt has been made to satisfy it in the interpretation of the works presented, and by short references. After a few words about the writers of the masterpieces selected for analysis, the remaining pages of this introduction will be devoted to a summary review of the previous literary activity of Germany.

In one of the great German art galleries there is a marble group, the work of a modern artist, representing Goethe and Schiller, and behind them Lessing. Goethe and Schiller are facing each other and joining hands, while Lessing's extended hands touch their shoulders as if to clasp the two poets in his embrace, strengthening their happy union. It is very much in this way that the picture of German literature presents itself to the German mind. Whenever the subject is mentioned, these three great names arise as naturally as the stone cast into the clear waters of the calm lake brings the bubbles to its surface. Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller are the Triumvirs of German literature, who, standing on the summit, survey the past and the present. Among the writers that succeed these classics there is none that has attained to such an

exalted station. Heinrich Heine, Joseph Victor von Scheffel, Hermann Sudermann, Gerhart Hauptmann, and Ernst von Wildenbruch hold a prominent rank. It is desirable that every student and lover of literature should have some knowledge of their work. They have been given a place in these introductory studies; but their place in the hearts of their countrymen, especially that of the last three still living authors, is by no means so firmly assured, and their relative position in the history of German literature is by no means beyond any possible controversy.

In creating a mental picture of the literature of the German people the three representatives of its golden age were spoken of as standing on a mountain peak. The simile, if there is any special merit in it, has not the merit of newness. Suggesting itself so immediately and naturally, it almost seems trivial and commonplace. A great historian of German literature has conceived of its course as moving in waves, trough and crest in regular succession. The comparison of the historical developments of literature with the regular change of dale and height is common, yet convenient and impressive. The men and works treated in this volume belong to the so-called "classical period," beginning near the second half of the eighteenth century, and the "modern period," usually dated from Goethe's death. The preceding periods in the literary evolution of Germany cover almost ten times as many years. For the purpose of this introduction the dividing lines are not essential. There is, however, one elevation towering so high above the level of the landscape that it overlooks the vale with wide command. This period centering around the year 1200, and

covering about a hundred years, is only second, if second, to the period culminating around the year 1800. It drew its material from a rich, mythical, and historical past. Our bird's-eye view of these old hero legends, as incorporated in imperishable song, will be necessarily brief and matter of fact, but the reader will readily supplement it by recalling some well-known facts of modern life and by comparing reminiscences of his own with the rough outlines given, as this great literature has had an important bearing and a vitalizing influence upon our own days. The three great epics of mediæval Germany, the names of which bring some recollections to the minds of all cultured men, are the "Song of the Nibelungs," "Gudrun," and "Parzival." The greatest of these is "der Nibelunge liet." The facts presented in this version of the old Germanic saga are as follows:

### *Part I. Siegfried's Death*

Kriemhild, the sister of the kings of Burgundy—Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher—dreams of her hunting falcon falling dead at her feet, killed by two eagles. Her mother counsels her to be on her guard that the noble hero (such as she most likely would marry) be not killed by murderers. Siegfried arrives in Worms at the Burgundian court to woo the beautiful Kriemhild. He does not see her during the first year of his stay, for according to the custom of the time she lives in the secluded women's compartments. Accompanying her brother Gunther on an expedition to Iceland, and assuming his part (concealed from view by the magic "tarnkappe") in a contest of skill and arms, Siegfried conquers Brunhild, and thus wins for Gunther the strong maiden queen. In return, Gunther

gives to Siegfried his sister, as he had promised. Kriemhild follows her valiant husband to his royal home at Hanten on the Nether Rhine. Ten years later Siegfried, invited by his brother-in-law, returns with his wife to the court at Worms. In a quarrel about their husbands' rank and virtue Kriemhild reveals to her sister-in-law that not Gunther but Siegfried obtained the victory over her strength. Brunhild's secret love of Siegfried turns to bitter hatred. Hagen, the most powerful of the Burgundian heroes, and her faithful vassal, promises to revenge the insult on the offender. To this end a war is proclaimed, with the natural expectation that Siegfried would offer his assistance to the Burgundians. Kriemhild, frightened by horrible dreams, confides her anxious forebodings to Hagen, telling him that her husband (as known from an older legend), by bathing in the blood of the dragon which he slew in one of his youthful adventures, has become invulnerable, except in one spot, between the shoulders, where a linden leaf had fallen. Hagen promises to protect him, asking her to mark the spot by sewing a red cross on the garment. Thus the loving wife assists the assassin who, true to his king, does not shun treachery and deceit to avenge his king's wife by the foulest of deeds. Siegfried falls, not in war, but after a gay chase, in which he had easily proven himself the strongest and bravest. Stooping to drink at the spring, he is pierced by his own spear (which he had leaned against a tree) flung by Hagen's treacherous hand. While Siegfried's father, the old Siegmund, returns home, Kriemhild remains in Worms. In her ceaseless and heartrending grief she finds some comfort in acts of charity. She spends freely from the "Nibelungenhort," the immense treasure of gold

that Siegfried gained by his victory over the king of the Nibelungs, the dwarf Alberich. Gunther who, in a moment of weakness, had consented to Siegfried's murder, pitying his sister, had conveyed it to her in many wagons from the Far North, but the cruel Hagen, fearing that she might employ the gold for hostile purposes, steals the treasure and sinks it into the Rhine.

### *Part II. Kriemhild's Revenge.*

Marcgrave Rüdiger comes to Worms to woo Kriemhild for Etzel, King of the Huns. After long deliberations, in which the prospect of revenge probably plays a prominent part, Kriemhild is persuaded to accept the proposal. She follows Rüdiger to Vienna, and becomes Etzel's wife. Years have passed, when the Burgundians receive an invitation to come to the Hunnish court. In spite of Hagen's protest the invitation is accepted. King Gunther and his two brothers, with a great retinue of the best warriors, start on the long journey. As they set forth over the Danube, two mermaids emerge from the troubled waters, and prophesy that none except the chaplain will see home again. To test the prophecy the man singled out by the prophetic words is thrown overboard, and strange to say, he gains in safety the shore from which they had embarked. After many adventures, and a pleasant stay at Bechlaren in the truly German home of Rüdiger, the heroes arrive at Vienna. Blödelin, persuaded by Kriemhild's promises, enters the hall where their servants have been given lodgings, and all are slain. In the general fight which now ensues, all Burgundians, as well as Kriemhild herself, are killed. Of the Huns King Etzel alone remains. His royal guests,

Dietrich von Bern (Theodoric, the King of the Ostrogoths) and the noble Hildebrand, Dietrich's armor-bearer, join him in mourning.

The measure used in the Lay of the Nibelungs is the "Nibelungenstrophe," thus called from its use in the poem. To give an idea of its structure the opening stanza is given here, as translated by Thomas Carlyle in his essay "On the Nibelungenlied" (originally published in *The Westminster Review*):

"We find in ancient story wonders many told,  
Of heroes in great glory, with spirit free and bold;  
Of joyances and high-tides, of weeping and of woe,  
Of noble Recken striving, mote ye now wonders know."

Three of the ten existing complete manuscripts have special importance. They date from the thirteenth century, and are written on parchment. The shortest of these three contains 2,316 stanzas like the one quoted. Traditions of different nationalities were treated at different times. These originally independent folk-songs were united about the end of the twelfth century. The poet who performed this task is unknown. Whoever did it, it is well done; the various episodes are harmoniously connected. The language is simple and grand. The characters are drawn by a master hand, and thoroughly true to nature. The poem reflects German virtues and German vices; and as a whole, it is a priceless monument of national greatness.

The second great epic, "Gudrun," deals with the legendary and historical traditions of the northern tribes of Germany living along the shores of the North Sea. In "Gudrun" three lays are fused into one. The first two parts treat of the ancestral history of the heroine, the third

tells of her own life. Gudrun, daughter of Hettel, King of the Hegelings (inhabitants of Friesland), is engaged to Herwig, King of Zealand, who has won her by his bravery. She is, however, carried off, together with her friend and companion, Hildburg, and many other maidens, by Hartmut the Norman who boldly invades the country. The father and the unfortunate lover follow Hartmut and force him to fight, but are defeated. Hettel is killed, and Herwig has to flee. Gudrun, firm and faithful, refuses to become Hartmut's wife, and is shamefully treated by his mother, Gerlin. After long years of loyal endurance and hard sufferings one day as she is occupied with the menial service of washing the linen on the shore, her rescuers, Herwig and Ortwin, arrive. The armies battle the next morning before Hartmut's castle. All who have done harm to Gudrun are slain. Hartmut and his sister Ortrun are made captives. The poem closes with three weddings: Herwig and Gudrun, Ortwin and Ortrun, Hartmut and Hildburg.

The "Gudrunstrophe" is a variation of the "Nibelungenstrophe," the third and the fourth lines having double instead of single rhymes, and the second half of the fourth line having five instead of four accented syllables. There is only one manuscript of the "Gudrun" in existence. In beauty of language and style, as well as in skilful delineation of character, the poem yields but little to the "Song of the Nibelungs." The two epics have been compared with the "Iliad" and its companion poem, the "Odyssey," and indeed, in spite of great diversity, there seem to be many points of comparison. It may be said that the fundamental idea of the "Gudrun" is that unchangeable, enduring love and loyalty are at last crowned

by victory, or as the pithy Roman saying expresses it: Love conquers all. While in the "Nibelungenlied" joy ends in sadness, in this song sadness turns to joy; while Kriemhild's passionate love is changed by the loss of the beloved man into violent hatred, demanding awful revenge for his murder, Gudrun's persevering love conquers all obstacles, endures and suffers everything, to be rewarded by regaining the faithful lover.

The third of the three great epics is not national in the sense of the "Nibelungenlied" or of the "Gudrun," of which in a certain sense it might be maintained that they are written by the people. "Parzival" is not a folk epic, but a court epic. Its writer is not unknown. Wolfram von Eschenbach belongs to the court poets, among whom he easily takes first rank. The Middle Ages, in fact, have not produced a greater poet. His "Parzival" has been likened to the greatest work of German literature, Goethe's "Faust." The chief events with which Wolfram garbs his profound ideas are these: Parzival, the son of the noble king of the Grail (to Wolfram the Grail is the precious stone which has fallen from heaven and is supplying meat and drink by its miraculous powers, to be renewed every Good Friday by a dove from heaven), is brought up in solitude by his mother, Queen Herzeloyde, to avoid the fate of his father who, a restless, valiant fighter, had found an early death on the battle-field. But Parzival's inborn desire for an active life cannot be suppressed. He leaves home, and after many unfortunate adventures comes to King Arthur. At his court he shows his prowess in many brave deeds, and is made knight of the Round Table. Having married Queen Conduiramurs, whom he had rescued, he resolves to seek his mother. But on his

way, without being aware of the fact, he enters Munsalväische, the castle of the Holy Grail, of which his father had been the ruler. He has to leave it in disgrace on account of not having shown sympathetic interest in the sick and suffering Grail king, his father's brother, Amfortas. In consequence of this misapprehension and inadvertence he is also banished from the Round Table. His pure and unworldly spirit is, however, set forth by way of contrast in an episode telling the adventures of the worldly Arthurian knight, Gawain. After a period of doubt and despair, Parzival's noble nature reasserts itself, he learns the true meaning of God and of the Grail, he conquers himself by leading a life of self-restraint, and is reappointed Knight of the Round Table. Summoned to the castle of the Grail, he restores the old sovereign to health, and becomes his successor as King of the Grail. He then orders his wife and his son Lohengrin to come.

The legends upon which Wolfram's "Parzival" is based are not German, they are of Celtic and Romance origin. Nobody doubts the right of the poet to freely take the material best adapted for his purpose. The profound thought pervading Wolfram's poem is the poet's incontestable property. It represents man ever erring and falling, but always striving and rising, and after severe tests in the school of life, finally attaining happiness, because he is steadfast and true. A passage in Bayard Taylor's translation may serve as a specimen of Wolfram's style and versification:

"The Queen considered all aright,  
And bade him tarry over night.  
'Hence not sooner shalt thou go,  
Ere I to thee shall wisdom show.

Shun untraveled road:  
Leave dark ways untrode;  
If they are sure and fair,  
Enter and journey there.  
Strive to be courteous then,  
Offer thy greeting to men.  
If thee a gray wise man  
Duty will teach, as well he can,  
Willingly follow his rede,  
And anger him not with deed.  
Son, be advised this thing:  
If thou a good dame's ring  
And her greeting may'st win to thee,  
Take: and thy troubles shall lighter be.  
Hasten to kiss her face,  
And to clasp her in firm embrace;  
For, when she is good and pure,  
'Twill good luck and courage insure.' "

I add the translator's estimate of the poem: "I must confess that the more I study the poem, the more I find a spiritual meaning shining through its lines. The perfect innocence and purity of Parzival as a boy are wonderfully drawn; the doubts of his age of manhood, the wasted years, the trouble and gloom which brood over him, suggest a large background of earnest thought; and although the symbolism of the Holy Grail may not be entirely clear, it means at least this much, that peace of soul comes only through Faith and Obedience." Though Wolfram wrote other works which would justify his claim to a permanent place in German literature, the "Parzival" is his masterpiece.

There are many other epic poems and poets of merit in this rich period. The fragment of "Tristan and Isolde" by Gottfried von Strassburg, written in masterful

language, and the noble epic of "Poor Henry" by Hartmann von der Aue are intimately connected with tendencies of modern literature. The epos was the characteristic mode of expression for the poets of this time, in the same way as the drama is the prevailing form employed by the classical and the contemporary poets of Germany. But it is also the time of the "Minnesingers" which produced some of the best German lyrics. Walther von der Vogelweide, the singer of beautiful songs, holds his place at the side of the best singers of the country. Here is his song on "Spring and Women":

"When the blossoms from the grass are springing,  
As they laughed to meet the sparkling sun,  
Early on some lovely morn of May,  
And all the small birds on the boughs are singing  
Best of music, finished and again begun,  
What other equal rapture can we pray?  
It is already half of heaven.  
But should we guess what other might be given,  
So I declare, that, which in my sight,  
Still better seems, and still would seem, had I the same delight.  
When a noble dame of purest beauty  
Well attired, with even garnished tresses,  
Unto all, in social habit, goes,  
Finely gracious, yet subdued to duty,  
Whose impartial glance her state expresses,  
As on stars the sun his radiance throws!  
Then let May his bliss renew us:  
What is there so blissful to us  
As her lips of love to see?  
We gaze upon the noble dame and let the blossoms be."

The epics of the Middle Ages, as well as the songs of Walther and his contemporaries are written in Middle High German. The literary language of Germany is

High German, the language spoken in High Germany—*sit venia verbo*—that is, in the highlands, the mountainous part of the country, in South and Central Germany. (The Low German of the Lowlands of the North in its earlier stages is represented in literature by the Hildebrand Song and by the Anglo-Saxon epic of Beowulf.) The High German had obtained its mastery already at the time of Charlemagne. There are three periods: The Old High German, extending to the close of the eleventh century or somewhat later; the Middle High German extending to the time of the Reformation; and the New High German, which is the language of to-day, the language recreated by Martin Luther after a period of linguistic and literary decay. Broadly speaking, the language of Luther is that of modern literature, but his influence did not cease there; his spirit is likewise discernible in modern literature. There is a strong religious sentiment in the best works of German literary art. Indeed, the spirit of German literature is that of Martin the Freeman, as he signed one of his letters, the spirit to which the Reformer gave expression in his “Address to the Christian Nobles of the German Nation.”

The “Fool’s Song,” as Luther has called his address, which appeared in the year 1520, is primarily directed against the abuses of the church. He begins by showing that the Romanists have drawn three walls around themselves, and by imploring, in truly epic manner, God to give us one of those trumpets that overthrew the walls of Jericho to enable us to blow down these walls of straw and paper. In attacking the first wall, the assertion that the spiritual (*i. e.*, clerical) power is above the temporal, he demolishes the “fine hypocritical device” of withdrawing the clergy

from secular jurisdiction by maintaining that all Christians are spiritual, that cobbler, smith, peasant, all alike are consecrated priests. Condemning this "accursed and devilish foundation" on which they build at Rome, he proceeds to overturn the second paper wall, that no one may interpret the Scriptures but the pope. Why, are there no pious Christians among us that have the true faith, spirit, understanding, word, and mind of Christ? We are all priests. How, then, should we not have the power of discerning and judging what is right or wrong in matters of faith? The third wall, that no one may call a council but the pope, falls, Luther declares, with the other two. If the pope should wish to use his power to prevent the calling of a free council, we must disrespect him, and if he should begin to excommunicate and fulminate, we must define this as the "ravings of a madman"; there is no authority in the church but for reformation.

What has been given is a synopsis of the first chapter of the address; the two remaining ones specialize on the general statements and offer propositions of reform striking at the very root of the evil. The worldliness of the pope, the uselessness of the people called cardinals, and of other "papal vermin lying in wait for fat livings" are censured. He condemns the terrible oaths which bind bishops to the service of the pope; the pope's usurpation of power over the emperor; the pilgrimages to Rome or to "glorified saints and country chapels where the devil's own work is performed"; the annual festivals, saints' days; processions and marches for the dead; the custom of kissing the pope's feet, contrasting with it Christ's action of washing his disciples' feet. On the other hand, he insists on tolerance towards other forms of belief. After devoting

considerable space to the reformation of the universities, he reviews the history of the Holy Roman Empire, demonstrating in vigorous language how through the craft and the knavery of the popes, the Germans have dearly paid for this "gift of the pope's wickedness," with incalculable bloodshed, with loss of their liberty, with a "robbery of their wealth," with unspeakable treachery and insult. Other items considered by Luther in this address—such as extravagance in dress, excess in eating and drinking, buying on credit, the ill-gotten wealth of the Fuggers (the Rothschilds of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the maintenance of public brothels—show that the spirit of reform in Luther was not confined to the church.

German literature has not produced anything more momentous than this address in either of the two centuries preceding or in the two following its publication. It may be that the style lacks elegance and the language finish—the pamphlet was written before he had created a literary language by revising the popular tongue through his masterful translation of the Bible—but like every good work of true literary art it speaks the hidden thought of the age, and voices the sentiment of the nation. The words of Bismarck, "We Germans fear God, but nothing else," might be prefixed to it as a motto, for it stands as an everlasting memento against any attempts to enslave the souls of men. To Luther, as to every German, religion is primarily a matter of heart and conscience. The man that wrote the "Address to the Christian Nobles of Germany" is the man that lives in the popular mind of the Germany of to-day, the man who created that spirit of free inquiry which is the animating soul and

motive power in all departments of learning in Germany,—the safeguard of the scholar and seeker after truth.

More than the great poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Luther has pressed his stamp upon modern German literature and thought; almost all German writers of note have in some way acknowledged this indebtedness.

The greatest work of Luther's life, from a literary as well as a linguistic view, is, of course, his translation of the Bible.

Religious thought has influenced German language and literature and increased its wealth and depth more than any other element. The first document of importance, which no student of Germanic literature can afford to pass by, is a translation of the Bible in the Gothic tongue. This version is the work of Ulfila, the bishop of the West Goths, who lived from 311 to 381. He himself created its alphabet out of Runic, Greek, and Latin characters. Several fragmentary manuscripts of this oldest German document have been discovered, one in the abbey of Werden in the Rhine province in the sixteenth, another in Wolfenbüttel in the eighteenth century. The first, called "Codex Argenteus," on account of its silver letters on red parchment and its silver binding, is the more important. Since the close of the Thirty Years' War it has been in the Swedish University Library at Upsala.

During the Old High German period the language was extensively employed for biblical glosses, interlinear versions, commentaries, and translations of the Bible, especially of the Gospels. Among these "Germanizers" of the Bible, Hrabanus Maurus, Alcuin's pupil, and abbot of the cloister in Fulda in 822, is to be mentioned.

All these efforts received impulse and stimulus from

Charlemagne, who attempted to write the first German grammar himself, and who ordered the popular songs to be collected. To this great emperor the German language is deeply indebted. He was the first to attack the prevailing error that God could be adored only in the three languages written on the cross.

To the time of the Carolingians belongs likewise the oldest German life of Jesus, the "Heliand," composed in Low German alliterative poetry and based upon Matthew, and the "Christ" of Otfrid von Weissenburg, a life of the Savior founded upon a combination of the four Gospels, of less literary value than the "Heliand," but more important for the development of the language, because written in High German. It is also the first work in which rhyme is employed.

The spirit of Charlemagne and of the school of Hrabanus Maurus lived on during the reign of the Ottonian emperors, who, however, on their part did little for the propagation of German culture.

The picture of the development of the German language in its first stage would be incomplete without mention of the man whom his pupils, in appreciation of his merits, called "Teutonicus," but who is better known as Notker Labeo—that is, Notker with the big lips. Knowing German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, he was considered one of the most learned men. As preceptor of the school of the cloister of St. Gall in its most flourishing period, about the year 1000, he made the German language as the vehicle of instruction. He encouraged his pupils to translate into German, guided their efforts, and set an example by a smooth and clever translation of many portions of the Bible. Unfortu-

nately most of his writings are lost, but we can form a judgment about the character of his work from the still extant versions of the Psalms and of other parts of the Old and New Testaments. (These documents were published in 1883 for the celebration of Luther's four hundredth anniversary.) During the whole period, the reading of the Bible formed the basis of instruction in the schools, and we possess more than forty manuscripts with continuous Latin-German commentaries.

The language of the Middle High German literature was not the language of the people. It has been questioned, and justly, whether there was in our second period such a thing as a language commonly recognized for use in writing. The Christian Church, once well established, returned to the old disastrous notion, already rejected by Charlemagne, that the Latin language was the only proper vehicle of ecclesiastical thought. She denied to the German language her sanction, and treated it as a barbarian tongue. To say the most, she tolerated it where she could not do otherwise. Here and there a man arose who, with a true understanding of the people's need, preached in German. Such endeavors to popularize the Gospel were hailed with delight. The Franciscan monk Berthold von Regensburg, about the middle of the thirteenth century, is reported to have drawn audiences compared with which the attendance at Moody's services may be deemed small.

Tauler's "Theologia deutsch," written in the next century, was much read. But tendencies like these were in opposition to the established notions of the church and found little encouragement. Can we wonder at the rapid decay of the language in consequence of this selfish policy?

How pernicious this influence has been to unity in speech, how far-reaching in its effects, may be seen from Professor Behaghel's undoubtedly correct statement, that even "at present the Westphalian peasant and the Swiss herdsman are able to understand one another as little as a Frenchman and a Chinaman." Official documents coming from the north could not be understood in the south of Germany. The adoption of a language which might be understood in the different parts of the realm became an urgent necessity. For various reasons the Upper Saxon dialect, spoken in and around Magdeburg and in the cities of Meissen and Silesia, obtained a supremacy. The Emperor Maximilian and his chancellor, Niklas Ziegler, who spread deeds and documents written in this official language all over the country, deserve honorable mention for their earnest endeavors. The chancery of the Saxon electorate followed the example of the imperial chanceries. This first step towards unity in the written use of the language is momentous, though its import has been overestimated. But however small, it was a beginning; a right principle was stated.

What was needed was a creative spirit: a great cause, a great man, a great work. These conditions were soon to be realized: the great cause was the Reformation of the Church, the great man was Luther, his great work the translation of the Bible. No man was ever better fitted for his task. He sprang, as Köstlin says, from a firm, tough race, deeply rooted in the native soil. "I am a peasant's son," he says, "my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have been genuine peasants." He was a Saxon; in Meissen a good German was spoken. His travels freed him from local influences. Living in

Magdeburg, Eisenach, Erfurt, and Wittenberg, he came in touch with the different shades of the language. His correspondence with all parts of Germany could not but furnish him with an abundance of linguistic material. Tables, benches, chairs, window sills, drawers, and book-cases, were, according to his own expression, always filled with letters, most of them asking for spiritual advice. Since 1516 he read eagerly the sermons of Tauler, whose "Theologia deutsch" was published by him for the first time. No doubt the study of Tauler was helpful to him; more so than the language of the chanceries. Some have attributed to the latter too great an influence upon Luther, misguided by his own utterance, "I speak according to the Saxon chancery." Luther says himself in another place, "Nobody cares to speak genuine German, especially not those gentlemen of the chanceries (and those vile preachers and affected scribblers)." The foundation upon which Luther built was a firmer rock, it was the old language of the first period, which suppressed for centuries lived on like a river flowing for a time underground. "God is to be thanked," says George, the Prince of Anhalt, in the first decades of the Reformation, "that in spite of it [referring to the corruption of the clergy] our parents, and especially our mothers, have remained our best house ministers and bishops through whom the articles of faith and prayer have been preserved." These are the channels by means of which the Old High German language came to Luther. No man can create an artificial language and force it upon a nation. In Luther the work of Ulfilas, of Charlemagne, of Notker, and of the whole past is consummated. His work is the crowning result of the effort of a people to

clothe its religious longings in a national garb. All the essential expressions of Christian faith, an immense mass of biblical terms and phrases, had obtained citizenship. The clay was there, Luther breathed into it a living soul.

The fact that there was a complete translation of the Bible a century before Luther, and that it had run through fourteen editions up to the year 1518, besides eight translations of the Psalms, two of Revelations *et al.*, is of very little significance. They were based upon the Vulgate, while Luther's is founded upon the original Greek and Hebrew. They were awkward, heavy, full of misunderstandings, and only of local import. The nation took little notice of them. Luther's version commended itself at once to the people, for, aloof from dialectical, local, and personal barriers, it made the Bible universal property. The Germans found here their own language as spoken in the market-places and in the workshops, as spoken by mothers and children, as spoken by men of whatever rank or condition of life. We admire, furthermore, in this work a monument of German industry, patience, and genius. From the first edition of the New Testament in 1522 to his last edition of the Bible in 1545 Luther constantly revised and improved the text. This is especially evident in the Psalms. The earlier edition of 1524 is, according to Luther, nearer the Hebrew and farther from the German, the later of 1532 nearer the German and farther from the Hebrew.

Psalm 73, verses 25 and 26 read in the first edition: "Whom have I in heaven, and on earth nothing pleases me, when I am with thee. My flesh and my heart is faint, God is my heart's treasure and my portion eternally." This is a close rendering of the Hebrew text, it

stands nearer to it than the English version. The second edition reads: "If I have only thee, I do not care for heaven and earth. Though body and soul faileth, thou art, oh God, my heart's comfort and my portion forever." This second rendering is certainly quite a way from the Hebrew text, much farther than the English version, but it is thoroughly German; it is free, but undoubtedly correct. The principle of Luther's translation is not literalization, not a slavish adherence to the letter, but spiritualization. The true translator, like the true poet, must understand the nation, its inmost thought and imagination; he must be able to watch the gentlest vibrations of the national pulse. The spirit of holy enthusiasm which in the times of Bonifacius opened new countries to Christianity, is the spirit of Luther, and in addition the national spirit. He lived himself, body and mind, into the revelation; he lived in and with the authors of the Bible, but he lived also in and with the people, whose soul lay open to him. Here lies the secret of the power of Luther's translation, and its immediate popularity. It is not a mere translation. Born of deepest experience, it is a popular book in the fullest and best meaning of the word: "A monument of German literature and a landmark in its history." In any history of the German language or German literature, Luther must be mentioned as the rock upon which the succeeding generations reared the structure. Klopstock's "Messias," the first work of prominence of the modern era, is closely linked to Luther's Bible translation. The year of the publication of three cantos of this greatest German religious epic, 1748 (two other Messianic poems of the ninth century the "Heliand" and "Christ" have been mentioned), is accepted as the date of the beginning

of the classical period. The "Messias" (no doubt influenced by Milton's "Paradise Lost"), of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803), is written in hexameters. It consists of twenty songs. The first song transports us into heaven where God-Father and God-Son are in council. The Messias declares his willingness to take upon himself the work of man's redemption, and God his consequent readiness to forgive man's sins. The second song takes place in hell. The princes of hell, Satan and Adramalech, conspire against the Messias, but are opposed by Abbadonna. In the third song we find ourselves on earth; we meet Christ on the Mount of Olives, and make the acquaintance of Judas, the traitor. The remaining songs deal with the events in the Savior's life up to his ascension. An appreciative analysis of the poem is given in Kuno Francke's excellent "History of German Literature as Determined by Social Forces."

Klopstock's merit in enriching the German language and in reviving the national spirit in literature justify his being stationed upon the threshold of the great age of German literature, which is represented by some of its masterpieces in the subsequent chapters.

It remains to say a few words about Christoph Martin Wieland. Born over nine years later than Klopstock and living almost ten years longer, he died, as Klopstock did, in his eightieth year. His writings show in the beginning of his literary career the same religious bent, but assume later a decidedly sensuous character, returning into more serious channels in the last and best stage of his literary activity during which he wrote his best known work, "The Oberon" (1780). Wieland is credited with counteracting Klopstock's one-sided influence. To the national

and religious spirit of the latter he added the cosmopolitan view; the exaggerated pathos of Klopstock's language he counterbalanced by easy grace and elegance of expression. The stanza of "Oberon" is the Italian *ottava rima*, the verse of Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," Ariosto's "Raging Roland," employed by Goethe in his dedication to "Faust" and in his epilogue to Schiller's "Song of the Bell," by Byron in his "Don Juan" and "Beppo." Shakespeare's "Summer Night's Dream" and an "Old French Romance" served as prototypes. I close with Goethe's criticism of the poem: "As long as poetry is poetry, as long as gold remains gold, and crystal crystal, 'Oberon' will be loved and honored as a masterpiece of poetic art."





GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

## CHAPTER II

LESSING: "MINNA VON BARNHELM; OR, THE SOLDIER'S FORTUNE," THE FIRST MASTERPIECE  
OF GERMAN COMEDY

1729-1769

Since Luther, Germany has given birth to no such intellectual athlete, no son so German to the core. Greater poets she has had, but no greater writer, no nature so finely tempered.—*James Russell Lowell.*

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was born in Kamenz, a small town in Saxony, about twenty-three miles northeast of Dresden, on the 22d of January, 1729. His father was a Lutheran clergyman, educated at Wittenberg, somewhat narrow himself, but the son of a man who in his master's thesis boldly pleaded for complete freedom of religious belief; of Lessing's mother, no biographer of her noted son has succeeded in finding anything remarkable. She was the daughter of the pastor primarius, whose successor she married; she revered her husband and his calling, and reared her twelve children (of whom Gotthold was the second) to conduct themselves in a manner befitting their position as children and grandchildren of pastores primarii.

Concerning his education Lessing himself says: "I have studied at the Fürstenschule (Prince's school) at Meissen, and after that at Leipzig and Wittenberg, but I should be greatly embarrassed if I were asked to say

what." It is true that, while he was always eager for knowledge, he showed little inclination to pursue it along the well-defined and carefully hedged paths leading to professional degrees. A wide reader, he was early attracted toward the drama. During his preparatory studies at Meissen, he devoted his free hours to the reading of Latin plays; and while at Leipzig—where he matriculated as student of theology at the age of seventeen—he wrote "The Young Student." This play appeared on the Leipzig stage, one of the best at the time, as the yearly fairs held at Leipzig attracted good theatrical companies. Lessing became a frequenter of the theater, made the acquaintance of actors, wrote *Anacreontic* verses, and lived in a somewhat free and easy manner.

Rumors of the gay life of their young theologian reached Kamenz. Pastor Primarius Lessing ordered his son home. When the summons was not obeyed he wrote: "Your mother is dangerously ill and wishes to speak to you before she dies." Lessing started at once, notwithstanding the severe cold and the lack of an overcoat. To his delight he found his mother in good health.

During the three months spent at home Lessing convinced his parents that he was no black sheep, but morally sound and eager for study, although not along theological lines. They reluctantly consented to a change in his studies, and on his return he matriculated as student of medicine and philosophy.

Soon, however, he was convinced of the uselessness of trying to conform to his father's wishes in the choice of a profession, and as he was also harassed by debts, he left the University of Leipzig and went to Berlin to strike out

for himself on the sea of literature. Here he found a coterie of young men of letters—freebooters as it were—owing allegiance to no literary school, but all enthusiastic for the great king, to whom they owed the freedom to pursue unhindered their intellectual life,—little more, for the language in which Frederick thought and wrote was French; did he not himself confess to not having read no German book since the years of his childhood?

Among these enthusiasts was a young officer, Ewald von Kleist, who was stationed with his regiment at Potsdam. Devoted to his muse and his king, von Kleist sang the praises of spring, of Frederick, and of the German army. With this soldier-poet Lessing formed a warm friendship which continued until the death of von Kleist at the battle of Kunersdorf, eleven years later. Two other friendships date from this period: that with the Jew, Moses Mendelssohn, grandfather of the great composer, and with the book-dealer, Frederick Nicolai. Major von Kleist and Moses Mendelssohn are unquestionably the originals, so far as these characters are modeled on any single person, of Lessing's Major von Tellheim and Nathan, the heroes of the two dramas selected for interpretation, "Minna von Barnhelm" and "Nathan the Wise."

At Berlin, Lessing led the life of a "sparrow on the house-tops." But even a sparrow must have some grain. Lessing obtained his by translations, critical reviews, and other original work. His Berlin life was interrupted by something less than a year's residence in Wittenberg, where he received the degree of Master of Arts. On his return he resumed his literary work; he collected of his already published writings such as he considered of suffi-

cient merit, in a series of volumes, and wrote several minor plays, in which the influence of Diderot is discernible. Lessing frankly acknowledges this indebtedness.

In 1755 his "Miss Sara Sampson" appeared. This play, English not only in title, but in treatment of the subject, met with decided success, and was acted on nearly all the stages of Germany.

It had always been Lessing's wish to be in some way connected with the theater. An opening of promise called him to Leipzig. Two years later, in the spring of 1758, none of his hopes having been realized, he returned again to the Prussian capital. To this, his third Berlin period, belong "The Literary Letters," which he published with Mendelssohn and Nicolai. These letters struck a new note in criticism—and no faint, uncertain one. Lessing always used heavy weapons. His blows were intended to demolish, and they did so. The first of the series was directed against Professor Gottsched, to whom, there is no doubt, Lessing failed to do justice. Gottsched, vain and pompous as he was, meant well for German literature. His efforts for the establishment of a common dialect in all the German states and for the elevation of the stage were in the right direction. But reformers and liberators cannot wear gloves—Gottsched's literary theories were false, and the work founded on them was worse than worthless. In his hands, the German drama had indeed become less vulgar, but it was dead. The first thing to be done was to clear the stage of the decorously dressed corpse to make way for a living German organism. This Lessing did, and what is a marked characteristic of all of his work, his criticism was constructive. He not merely

abolished the old conventional outworn forms, but became the originator of a new era in the dramatic literature of Germany.

In 1760 he accepted a position as secretary with General von Tauentzien, governor of Breslau, with whom he had become acquainted through von Kleist. From this period dates the inception of two of his best works, the "Laokoon" and the above-mentioned "Minna von Barnhelm." The greater part of the comedy was written during his residence in Breslau. In 1758, about the time of Lessing's return to Berlin, a post in the royal library became vacant, and efforts were made by his friends to secure it for him. Frederick gave the place to an utterly incompetent Frenchman, ignoring the claims of the man whom posterity places next to him, and has always intimately connected with his age. In 1766 Lessing published his "Laokoon," a work which even now deserves the careful study of every student of art and literature. In order to understand the value of the work at the time, we must remember that to his contemporaries, painting, sculpture, and poetry appeared as governed by the same laws. Lessing made the difference between these arts apparent. The treatise is a masterpiece of German prose and of accurate criticism. It gives a clear insight into the nature of art in general, and in special branches, and furthermore lays down those eternal principles from which it is not safe to depart except in minor details. The next year "Minna von Barnhelm" appeared.

At the time the play was in press an attempt was made to raise the standard of the stage by establishing a national theater in Hamburg. Lessing, who already stood high as a man of letters, was asked to assist in the undertaking.

He accepted the invitation, and went to Hamburg in April, 1767, to act as theatrical adviser and critic. In this capacity he began his series of papers known as "The Hamburg Dramaturgy." At first they appeared regularly twice a week, and were occupied with the purposes and plays of the new theater. But their tone soon became more general, and finally they had no connection with any stage, even being continued for some time after the new theater had been closed for want of support. Written in the vigorous style which stamps all of Lessing's work, they are polemic in character, one of their principal objects being to convey the right interpretation and adaptation of Aristotle's theories to the drama as opposed to the erroneous conceptions of Corneille and other French dramatists. Although the essential elements of the discussion have become common property and axioms of all literary criticism, the dramaturgy is even now well worth reading, because it is permeated with that intangible something which makes literature. Financially the undertaking was not a success, but Lessing's life in Hamburg was pleasant in several respects. He was a welcome guest in the best circles of the city, he became friendly with Klopstock, he made the acquaintance of the family of Professor Reimarus, and he met the woman who ultimately became his wife, Eva König, then the wife of his friend, the silk manufacturer König, and the mother of four children.

"MINNA VON BARNHELM; OR, THE SOLDIER'S FORTUNE"

"Minna von Barnhelm" is a comedy in five acts. The arrival at the "King of Spain," a hotel in Berlin, of Minna von Barnhelm, accompanied by her maid, Francisca, and

two men-servants, has furnished the landlord, whose cringing, mercenary character is drawn with rare touches of humor, with an excuse for removing the Major's effects, during his temporary absence, to a room "by the pigeon-house, at the back, with a view between the neighbor's chimneys." Just, the Major's servant, is incensed at the indignity offered to his master, all forsooth "because he let his payment run for a couple of months and because he does not spend quite so much as he used." The landlord for reasons of his own, which will appear, endeavors to appease Just with a drop of something good. As Just, despite his three glasses of genuine, double-distilled Dantzig, still berates the landlord as an ill-mannered brute, Major von Tellheim enters.

*Maj. T.* Just, I think you are quarreling! What did I tell you?

*Landlord.* Quarrel, Your Honor! God forbid! Would your most humble servant dare to quarrel with one who has the honor of being in your service?

*Just.* If I could but give him a good whack on that cringing cat's back of his.

*Land.* It is true Herr Just speaks up for his master, and that rather warmly; but in that he is right. I esteem him so much the more; I like him for it.

*Just.* I should like to knock his teeth out for him!

*Land.* It is a pity that he puts himself in a passion for nothing. For I feel sure Your Honor is not displeased with me in this matter—since necessity—made it necessary—

*Maj. T.* More than enough, sir! I am in your debt; you clear out my room in my absence. You must be paid, I must seek a lodging elsewhere. Very natural.

*Land.* Elsewhere? You are going to quit, honored sir? O, unfortunate, stricken man that I am. No, never! Sooner shall the lady give up the apartments again. The Major cannot, will not, let her have his room. It is his; she must go; I cannot help it. I will go, honored sir—

*Maj. T.* My friend, not two foolish strokes instead of one! The lady must retain possession of the room—

*Land.* And Your Honor could suppose that from distrust, from fear of not being paid, I . . . . as if I did not know that Your Honor could pay me as soon as you chose. The sealed purse . . . . five hundred thalers in louis d'or marked on it— which Your Honor had in your writing desk . . . . is in good keeping.

The Major left alone with his servant explains that the purse found by the landlord belongs to his former sergeant, Paul Werner, who gave it to him for safe keeping. Just assures his master that it was really intended for his use, as Werner had heard of the Major's temporary financial embarrassment and taken this way of relieving it. The Major, his honor wounded, orders Just to make out his account, as they must part. The account when rendered shows a decided balance in the Major's favor; for money advanced Just's father in misfortune, for Just's attendance while sick in the hospital, etc. When the Major will not admit that he owes him anything, Just tells a very affecting little story of a dog which from thankfulness at being drawn out of the water would not leave him, although he never got a crust of bread from his hand, and asks the Major not to make him think worse of himself than of his dog. The Major, affected by the story, decides they will not part. At this juncture a servant appears presenting his mistress's compliments to the officer who has been turned out of his room on her behalf; we learn that the unknown lady mentioned by the landlord comes from Saxony, and is here to look for her lover. The garrulous servant would have told more, but the Major stops his flow of language by stating abruptly that he wished to know the lady's name, not her secrets.

After the departure of the servant, von Tellheim gives a ring to Just, with instructions to pawn it for eighty louis d'or. The politeness of the unknown lady affects him more than the churlishness of the landlord; he will get out of the house as quickly as possible; Just shall pay the landlord and remove his things, the cheaper the place the better. As the Major hands the ring to Just, he remarks: "Here, take this ring—the only thing of value which I have left—of which I never thought of making such a use." Our attention is thus attracted to the ring, and we feel sure that it is intimately connected with the plot of the play. While Just plans to pawn the ring to the landlord in order to vex him, he is interrupted by Paul Werner, who comes to bring more money to the Major. Just tells him that his money is not needed, and that he may have the other back as soon as he pleases.

At the beginning of the second act Minna von Barnhelm and her maid Francisca are conversing in the parlor of the inn; it is early in the morning. The conversation is about Minna's lover, von Tellheim, from whom she has only heard once since the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. Her heart tells her that she is going to find him. Francisca's efforts to shake her mistress's perfect confidence in her lover are of no avail. Minna eagerly excuses Tellheim. "His regiment," she says, "was disbanded after the peace. Who knows into what a confusion of bills and papers he may thereby have been brought?" Suddenly a knock is heard. In response to Francisca's "Come in," the head of the landlord appears in the half-open door. He has come to take, in accordance with the police regulations, the name, residence, business, etc., of his new guest. His evident curiosity in the matter leads

to an amusing conversation between him and the lively Francisca. Finally Minna proposes to postpone the whole matter until her uncle's arrival.

*Minna.* I told you yesterday why he did not come with me. He had an accident with his carriage ten miles from here, and did not wish that I should remain a night longer on the road, so I had to come on. I am sure he will not be more than four and twenty hours after us.

*Land.* Very well, madam, we shall wait for him.

*Min.* He will be able to answer your questions better. He will know to whom, and to what extent, he must give an account of himself—what he must relate respecting his affairs, and what he may withhold. . . . And his rooms are in readiness, I hope?

*Land.* Quite, your ladyship, quite—except the one—

*Francisca.* Out of which, I suppose, you will have to turn some other honest man?

The landlord finds, as he sarcastically remarks, Francisca very compassionate, but Minna agrees with her maid that the landlord should not have driven the officer out on her account. The landlord excuses himself by saying that it was only a discharged officer; that the hotels and inns are full of them; and that a landlord has to be on his guard. He, indeed, might have let this one remain quiet two or three months longer, because if he had no money, he had at any rate money's worth. Turning then to Minna, he observes:

By the by, your ladyship, you understand about jewels, I suppose?

*Min.* Not particularly.

*Land.* Of course, your ladyship must. I must show you a ring, a valuable ring. I see you have a very beautiful one on your finger; and the more I look at it, the more I am astonished at the resemblance it bears to mine. There! just look, just look! [Taking the ring from its case and handing it to her.] What brilliancy! The diamond in the middle alone weighs more than five carats.

*Min.* [looking at it]. Good heavens! What do I see? This ring—

*Land.* Is honestly worth fifteen hundred thalers.

*Min.* Francisca! look!

*Land.* I did not hesitate for a moment to advance eighty pistoles on it.

*Min.* Do you not recognize it, Francisca?

*Francisca.* The same! Where did you get that ring, Mr. Landlord?

*Land.* Come, my girl! You surely have no claim to it.

*Francisca.* We have no claim to this ring! My mistress's monogram must be on it, on the inner side of the setting. Look at it, my lady!

*Min.* It is! It is! How did you get this ring?

The landlord explains how the ring came into his possession, and is sent to fetch its owner, with instructions not to reveal the names of the persons who desire to speak with him.

*Maj. T.* [walks in and the moment he sees Minna, rushes toward her]. Ah! my Minna!

*Min.* [springing toward him]. Ah! my Tellheim!

*Maj. T.* [starts suddenly back]. I beg your pardon, Fräulein von Barnhelm; but to meet you here—

*Min.* Cannot surely be so unexpected! [Approaching him, whilst he draws back still more.] Am I to pardon you because I am still your Minna? Heaven pardon you that I am still Fräulein von Barnhelm!

The Major begins to reply, but as he is evidently embarrassed by the presence of the landlord, Francisca, at a sign from her mistress, finally succeeds in getting the over-curious man out of the room.

*Min.* Well, are we both still mistaken!

*Maj. T.* Would to heaven it were so! But there is only one Minna, and you are that one.

*Min.* What ceremony! The world might hear what we have to say to one another.

*Maj. T.* You here! What do you want here, madam?

*Min.* Nothing now [*going to him with open arms*]. I have found all that I wanted.

*Maj. T.* [*drawing back*]. You seek a prosperous man, and one worthy of your love; and you find—a wretched one.

*Min.* Then do you love me no longer? Do you love another?

*Maj. T.* Ah! he never loved you who could love another afterwards.

. . . . .

*Min.* Do I understand you right? Stop, sir; let us see what we mean, before we make further mistakes. Will you answer me without shift or subterfuge? With nothing but a plain "yes" or "no"?

*Maj. T.* I will—if I can.

*Min.* You can. You must know what passes in your heart. Do you love me still, Tellheim? Yes, or no?

*Maj. T.* If my heart—

*Min.* Yes, or no?

*Maj. T.* Well, yes.

*Min.* Yes?

*Maj. T.* Yes, yes! Yet—

*Min.* Patience! You love me still; that is enough for me. Into what a mood have we fallen! An unpleasant, melancholy, infectious mood! I assume my own again. Now, my dear unfortunate, you love me still, and have your Minna still, and are unhappy? Hear what a conceited, foolish thing your Minna was—is. She allowed—allows herself to imagine that she makes your whole happiness. Declare all your misery at once. She would like to try how far she can outweigh it. Well?

. . . . .

*Maj. T.* Listen, then, madam. You call me Tellheim; the name is correct. But you suppose I am that Tellheim whom you knew at home; the prosperous man, full of just pretensions, with a thirst for glory; the master of all his faculties, both of body and mind; before whom the lists of honor and prosperity stood open; who, if he was not then worthy of your heart and your hand, dared

to hope that he might daily become more nearly so. This Tellheim I am now, as little as I am my own father. They both have been. Now I am Tellheim the discharged, the suspected, the cripple, the beggar. To the former, madam, you promised your hand; do you wish to keep your word?

*Maj. T.* That sounds very tragic. Yet, Major Tellheim, until I find the former one again—I am quite foolish about the Tellheims—the latter will have to help me in my dilemma. Your hand, dear beggar! [Taking his hand.]

*Maj. T.* [holding his hat before his face with the other hand, and turning away from her]. This is too much! What am I! Let me go, madam. Your kindness tortures me! Let me go.

*Maj. T.* What is the matter? Where would you go?

*Maj. T.* From you!

*Maj. T.* From me? [Drawing his hand to her heart.] Dreamer!

*Maj. T.* Despair will lay me dead at your feet.

*Maj. T.* From me!

*Maj. T.* From you. Never, never to see you again. Or at least determined, fully determined, never to be guilty of a mean action; never to cause you to commit an imprudent one. Let me go, Minna! [Tears himself away, and exit.]

*Maj. T.* [calling after him]. Let you go, Minna? Minna, let you go? Tellheim! Tellheim!

At the beginning of act three Just comes to the parlor with a letter in his hand from his master to Fräulein von Barnhelm. In the ensuing conversation between Francisca and Just we catch a glimpse of von Tellheim at the time he was stationed in Saxony—a dashing young officer with valet, huntsman, coachman, footman, and groom, all of whom except the latter, Just, have now deserted him. In this part of the play Paul Werner reappears, and an episode is introduced which furnishes much of the humor of the play,—his love-making with Francisca, in which the latter rather takes the initiative.

*Werner.* Little woman, do you know my Major?

*Francisca.* Major von Tellheim? yes, indeed, I do know that good man.

*Wer.* Is he not a good man? Do you like him?

*Fran.* From the bottom of my heart.

*Wer.* Indeed! I tell you what, little woman, you are twice as pretty as you were before.

Werner had interrupted a conversation between Francisca and the landlord, whom he calls a donkey for fancying that the Major had no more money. Francisca inquires if the Major really has any money, and Werner answers, "By the load!"

*Fran.* Really! Why then does the Major pawn his things? He pledged a ring, you know—

*Wer.* Pledged! Don't you believe it. Perhaps he wanted to get rid of the rubbish.

*Fran.* It is no rubbish; it is a very valuable ring; which moreover, I suspect, he received from a loving hand.

Werner suggests that probably this was the reason why the Major wanted to get rid of it. Odd things happen to a soldier in winter quarters; and sometimes a ring is conjured upon his finger, how he scarcely knows himself, but he would willingly lose the finger to be free of it. Especially is this the case in Saxony, where, if the Major had had ten fingers on each hand, he might have had all twenty full of rings. While Francisca goes to take the note to her mistress Major von Tellheim enters. Werner endeavors to make him accept a loan which the Major persists in refusing. He assures him, however, that he shall be the first and only person from whom he will borrow anything if he must borrow. Francisca returns bringing the Major's note, which she says they have not read. Her mistress expects him at three o'clock; she wishes to drive out and see the town; the Major must

accompany her. And he shall not come looking so soldier-like and Prussian; but in shoes, and with his hair trimmed. After the Major's exit Francisca addresses Werner: "Well, Mr. Sergeant!"

*Wer.* Little woman, if I come again, shall I, too, come smartened up a bit?

*Fran.* Come as you please; my eyes will find no fault with you. But my ears will have to be so much the more on their guard. Twenty fingers, all full of rings. Ah! Ah! Mr. Sergeant!

*Wer.* No, little woman; that is just what I wish to say to you. I only rattled on a little, there is nothing in it; one ring is quite enough for a man.

In this act Minna only appears in the last scene, the one immediately following Werner's exit. Despite Francisca's assertion to the contrary, she has read Tevonlheim's letter: "Each line spoke the honorable, noble man." "Each refusal to accept my hand declared his love for me," she exclaims. Nevertheless there is a little too much pride in his conduct. The lively Minna is herself again; she will not discard him, oh no, a man is never discarded for a single fault; she has thought of a trick, to pay him off a little with pride of the same kind. In this trick Francisca must play her part.

The first part of act four is occupied by an amusing scene between Minna von Barnhelm and a French officer, Riccaut de la Marlinière, in which we have the first intimation that a change for the better is about to occur in the Major's fortune. Before the arrival of Tellheim, Minna asks Francisca to take her betrothal ring and give her the one which the Major pawned to the landlord. She scarcely knows why, but fancies that she may be able to use it in carrying out her little trick.

Before resorting to the trick, Minna tries to convince

her lover that he would be guilty of an unworthy act should he not marry her. Her countrywomen would say, "That is she, that is the Fräulein von Barnhelm, who fancied that because she was rich she could marry the noble Tellheim; as if such men were to be caught with money." They would say this because they are envious of her.

But the Major is not to be convinced. Who would envy her the possession of a discharged officer, with sullied honor, a cripple, and a beggar!

Minna, who has heard similar assertions before, proceeds to examine each charge separately:

How did it happen that a man of his merit was discharged? Peace, the Major tells her, in substance, has made a great many officers superfluous to the "great ones," who have no compunctions in discharging them, because they have no high estimate of the motives which induce them to enter the service.

The "cripple" she laughs aside with, "Dear Tellheim, if you expect to go begging on the strength of your broken limbs, I prophesy that you will be relieved at very few doors, except at the doors of good-natured girls like myself."

The "beggar"? Surely that will be as little able to stand the test. If he have nothing except what her uncle is bringing him—the two thousand pistoles which he so generously advanced to the Saxon government during the Seven Years' War—he is no beggar.

The Major's reply gives the key to his present miserable situation:

You remember, madam, that I had orders to collect the contribution for the war most strictly in cash in the districts in your

neighborhood. I wished to forego this severity and advanced the money that was deficient myself.

*Min.* I remember it well. I loved you for that deed before I had seen you.

*Maj. T.* The government gave me their bill, and I wished at the signing of the peace, to have the sum entered among the debts to be repaid by them. The bill was acknowledged as good, but my ownership of the same was disputed. People looked incredulous, when I declared that I had myself advanced the amount in cash. It was considered as bribery, as a *douceur* from the government, because I at once agreed to take the smallest sum with which I could have been satisfied in a case of the greatest exigency. Thus the bill went from my possession, and if it be paid, will certainly not be paid to me. Hence, madam, I consider my honor to be suspected! Not on account of my discharge, which, if I had not received, I should have applied for.

Tellheim closes his explanation with what Minna calls "the terrible laugh of misanthropy." She tries to reassure him; their government will explain—Providence always indemnifies a man of honor—often even beforehand. This very action which has cost him two thousand pistoles gained her for him. Otherwise she would have never made his acquaintance. She went, she frankly tells him, uninvited to the first party where she thought she should meet him—and she went with the fixed determination to make him hers—because she loved him already.

All this time Tellheim has remained immovable with his eyes fixed on one spot; at last he gives his firm determination, from which nothing in the world shall turn him: "If I have not better luck in the game of life; if a complete change in my fortune does not take place; if—" After an interruption, he continues: "If they keep from me so shamefully what is my own; if my honor be not perfectly righted—I cannot, madam, ever be yours,

for I am not worthy in the eyes of the world of being yours. Minna von Barnhelm deserves an irreproachable husband. It is a worthless love which does not scruple to expose its object to scorn. He is a worthless man who is not ashamed to owe all his good fortune to a woman whose blind tenderness—" Here he is interrupted by Minna, who, convinced that it is impossible to persuade the Major of his folly in adhering so obstinately to his false conception of honor, resorts to the "trick." She returns to him as if it were her betrothal ring, his own ring, saying: "Let it be so! We will suppose we have never met." As the Major, taken by surprise, hesitates, she continues: "In one case you cannot be mine; in no case can I be yours. Your misfortune is probable; mine is certain. Farewell." And despite the Major's efforts to detain her she goes away to hide her tears. Francisca, left behind, explains to the Major in accordance with her mistress's instructions, that Count von Bruchsall has disinherited Minna, because she would not accept a husband of his choice; that on this account all her friends have deserted and slighted her; and that she and her mistress have fled from home to seek Tellheim.

When the Major hears this he is as if transformed. The insults to his honor are forgotten. He cannot await the return of Francisca, who has gone to find her mistress. Now he will look up Werner to accept his aid.

In act five, as Major von Tellheim, after his interview with Werner—in which the second intimation of a change for the better in the Major's fortune occurs—is conversing with Francisca, who has tried in vain to make him notice that he has taken back his own and not Minna's betrothal ring, Minna appears.

*Min.* [speaking as she comes out as if not aware of the Major's presence]. The carriage is at the door, Francisca, is it not? My fan!

*Maj. T.* [advancing to her]. Where are you going, Madam?

*Min.* [with forced coldness]. I am going out, Major. I guess why you have given yourself the trouble of coming back; to return me my ring. Very well, Major von Tellheim, have the goodness to give it to Francisca. Francisca, take the ring from Major von Tellheim! I have no time to lose [*is going*].

*Maj. T.* [stepping before her]. Madam! Ah! what have I heard? I was unworthy of such love.

*Min.* So, Francisca, you have—

*Fran.* Told him all.

*Maj. T.* Do not be angry with me, madam. I am no deceiver. You have, on my account, lost much in the eyes of the world, but not in mine. In my eyes you have gained beyond measure by this loss. It was too sudden. You feared it might make an unfavorable impression on me; at first you wished to hide it from me. I do not complain of this mistrust. It arose from the desire to retain my affection. That desire is my pride. You found me in distress; and you did not wish to add distress to distress. You could not divine how far your distress would raise me above any thoughts of my own.

*Min.* That is all very well, Major, but it is now over. I have released you from your engagement; you have, by taking back the ring—

*Maj. T.* Consented to nothing! On the contrary, I now consider myself bound more firmly than ever. You are mine, Minna, mine forever [*takes off the ring*]. Here, take it for the second time—the pledge of my fidelity.

*Min.* I take that ring again! That ring?

*Maj. T.* Yes, dearest Minna, yes.

*Min.* What are you asking me? that ring?

*Maj. T.* You received it for the first time from my hand, when our positions were similar and the circumstances propitious. They are no longer propitious, but are again similar. Equality is always the strongest tie of love. Permit me, dear Minna [*seizes her hand to put on the ring*].

*Min.* What! by force, Major! No, there is no power in the

world which shall compel me to take back that ring! Do you think that I am in want of a ring? Oh! you may see [*pointing to her ring*] that I have another here which is in no way inferior to yours.

*Fran. [aside]. Well, if he does not see it now!*

*Maj. T. [letting fall her hand]. What is this? I see Fräulein von Barnhelm, but I do not hear her.—You are pretending.—Pardon me for using your own words.*

*Fran. [aside, in a surprised tone]. Not enough yet!*

*Min. Yes, sir, it would only be womanish vanity to pretend to be cold and scornful. No! Never! You deserve to find me as sincere as yourself. I do love you still, Tellheim, I love you still; but notwithstanding—*

*Maj. T. No more, dearest Minna, no more! [Seizes her hand again, to put on the ring.]*

*Min. [drawing back her hand]. Notwithstanding, so much the more am I determined that this shall never be, never! Of what are you thinking, Major? I thought your own distress was sufficient. You must remain here; you must obtain by obstinacy—no better phrase occurs to me at the moment—the most perfect satisfaction, obtain it by obstinacy . . . . And that even though the utmost distress should waste you away before the eyes of your calumniators—*

*Maj. T. So I thought, so I said, when I knew not what I thought or said. Chagrin and stifling rage had enveloped my whole soul; love itself, in the full blaze of happiness, could not illumine it. . . . . From this moment I will oppose nothing but contempt to the injustice which I suffer. Is this country the world? Does the sun rise here alone? Where can I not go? In what service shall I be refused? And should I be obliged to seek it in the most distant clime, only follow me with confidence, dearest Minna—we shall want for nothing. I have a friend who will assist me with pleasure.*

An orderly now appears with a letter for Major von Tellheim. While he is engaged in reading it, Francisca implores her mistress to make up with the poor Major, but

Minna prefers to let the difficulties explain themselves. Joyfully exclaiming that his fortune, his honor, all is re-established, the Major hands the letter to Minna, requesting her to read it.

*Min.* I would not presume, Major.

*Maj. T.* Presume! The letter is to me; to your Tellheim, Minna. It contains—what your uncle cannot take from you. You must read it! Do read it.

*Min.* If it affords you pleasure, Major [*takes the letter and reads*].

"My dear Major von Tellheim:

"I hereby inform you that the business which caused me some anxiety on account of your honor has been cleared up in your favor. My brother had a more detailed knowledge of it, and his testimony has more than proved your innocence. The treasury has received orders to deliver again to you the bill in question, and to reimburse the sum advanced. I have also ordered that all claims which the Paymaster's Office brings forward against your accounts be nullified. Please to inform me whether your health will allow of your taking active service again. I can ill spare a man of your courage and sentiments.

"I am your gracious King, etc."

Minna admits that Frederick may be a good man as well as a great king. This, however, does not concern her, as he is not her king. Major von Tellheim is about to re-enter the service; she congratulates him on his probable promotion. In reply the Major gives his views with reference to the soldier's profession: "I became a soldier," he says, "from party feeling—I do not myself know on what political principles—and from the whim that it is good for every honorable man to try the profession of arms for a short time, to make himself familiar with danger, and to learn coolness and determination. Extreme necessity alone could have compelled me to make

this trial a fixed mode of life, this temporary occupation a profession." In conclusion he urges Minna to marry him the next day. But she pretends to aspire to as pure and noble a love as the Major. In her refusal she uses the same arguments and often the very words which the Major had employed in refuting her. At last she sums up with: "In short, Tellheim, hear what I have firmly determined, and from which nothing in the world shall turn me—" Although interrupted by the Major, she proceeds: "As certainly as I have given you back the ring with which you formerly pledged your troth to me, as certainly as you have taken back that same ring, so certainly shall the unfortunate Minna never be the wife of the fortunate Tellheim." She is deaf to all his entreaties, declaring that "She is a worthless creature who is not ashamed to owe her whole happiness to the blind tenderness of a man!" She commands the Major to leave her. But the Major will not listen. "Sooner," he says, "shall your shadow desert you." Here Just enters impetuously and tells his master, who had sent him to redeem the ring, that the landlord no longer has it. Fräulein von Barnhelm claimed it as her own, and will not give it up. A terrible light, as it seems to him, breaks in upon the Major; he believes Minna to be false, thinking that she came with the intention of breaking the engagement. He throws the purse of gold which Werner brings him on the floor, turns away his face and bites his fingers with rage. Minna regrets not having followed Francisca's advice, and admits that she has carried the jest too far. While she is imploring Tellheim to listen to her explanations, his Excellency the Count is announced.

Believing Minna in danger, Tellheim recovers himself

at once. His suspicions are forgotten. This cruel uncle shall have to deal with him. At last Minna succeeds in forcing the Major to look at the ring, which he now recognizes as his own. While he stands bewildered, Minna joyfully exclaiming, "Shall I take it again now? Shall I? Give it to me! give it!" takes the ring from her lover and puts it herself on his finger.

Count von Bruchsall, Minna's uncle (although Tellheim is a Prussian wearing a uniform, which he does not like), declares that "one must love an honorable man in whatever garb he may be." The main plot having thus happily terminated, the play ends with the betrothal of Francisca and Werner.

In the fall of 1767 "*Minna von Barnhelm*" was brought out at Hamburg, and well received. In Berlin, where the play was given during the month of March, 1768, its success was complete. A letter of the time says: "To-day, the '*Soldier's Fortune*' will be for the eighth time presented; it was astonishing how the Berlin world crowded to hear it yesterday." The writer goes on to say that every available place being filled, she had to content herself with a seat on the stage, and even that was occupied on both sides. Portraits of the heroine were engraved for calendars and punch-bowls.—The play is thoroughly German, both in plot and execution. In fact, the heroine is so decidedly German that she appears at first sight to Americans as overstepping the limits of womanliness in starting out to seek her lover. But we must bear in mind that an engagement has almost the sacredness of marriage to a German; we have seen, besides, that Minna was not ignorant of the financial embarrassments into which so many officers had been thrown at the conclusion of the

war. For the right valuation of the character of Major von Tellheim it must be remembered that the ideas of honor which obtain in German army life are (now as in Lessing's time) very rigid, and appear in some particulars to other nationalities even queer and whimsical. In the economy of the drama some scenes seem unnecessary, notably that between Tellheim and the widow of Captain Marloff, in which he refuses to accept payment on a note that he holds against his friend and former comrade, and that between Minna and the French adventurer, Riccaut de la Marlinière. It can, however, not be gainsaid that the former brings out in a striking way the magnanimity of the Major, winning for him our hearts and giving at the same time a clue to one of the causes of his poverty. And the latter—let us admit that it was a concession to the spirit of the times, showing up a poor French officer as counterpart to the poor Prussian officer, the one willing to be helped by any one, the other refusing the aid of the woman who loves him best of all—but then who would like to dispense with the inimitable humor of this scene? Another objection is not without reason, namely, that the protracted ring trick scenes in the second half of the play retard the action more than is desirable. There is hardly any literary masterpiece which does not contain some matter for a similar discussion. All that has been said about this drama, by way of censure, is of little moment compared with its undoubted merit. Taken as a whole, "*Minna von Barnhelm*" is a masterpiece of high rank. True to the technical laws which its author had outlined so well as underlying all dramatic work, it is conceded by the ablest critics to be the best German comedy. National to the core, it gives a true picture of German life and

character, dealing with facts and conceptions of its time, and portraying events in the Seven Years' War with the writer's greatest historical contemporary, Frederick the Great, looming up in the background—it marks a new era in German dramatic literature.

## CHAPTER III

LESSING: "NATHAN THE WISE," THE DRAMA  
OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

1770-1781

But if Lessing's theology must be considered imperfect, it is none the less admirable as far as it goes. With its peculiar doctrines of love and faith, it teaches a morality far higher than any that Puritanism ever dreamed of. And with its theory of development it cuts away every possible logical basis for intolerance. It is this theology to which Lessing has given concrete expression in his immortal poem of "Nathan."—*John Fiske*.

In May, 1770, Lessing assumed the duties of a position which he had accepted in Wolfenbüttel, a small town seven miles south of Brunswick. Officially he was librarian of the ducal library, but his especial duty was to investigate the manuscripts which it contained and bring to life any hidden treasures he might find.

Here he completed his "Emilia Galotti" begun long before in Leipzig. The motive for the play is found in the Roman story of the slaying of Virginia by her father in order to prevent her dishonor. But aside from this the details have little in common. The scene of Lessing's play is a small Italian court; the plot and delineation of characters are such as to convey a permanent lesson of the horror of a selfish and corrupted autocracy. It was enthusiastically received, and still holds its place on the German stage.

Wolfenbüttel is also the scene of Lessing's short but

happy domestic life. His friend König had died the year before Lessing left Hamburg. In his first letter written from Wolfenbüttel he addresses the widow indeed as "My dearest madam," but some of his sentiments show more than a friendly interest. "The whole evening," he says, "I have been walking with you in thought," and he adds, referring to her children, "I should often give a great deal to have about me at least my little Hamburg companions!" There is no reason to suppose, as some of Lessing's biographers do, that he had a kind of hopeless passion for her during the lifetime of her husband, though it is evident that the sensible, attractive, and vivacious Eva occupied a warm place in his heart. Their correspondence, which has been published, extends through six or seven years—for there were obstacles to be overcome before they could be married; debts on Lessing's side, the embarrassed state of her husband's business affairs on hers—affairs which she bravely set to work to regulate. After several years of struggle, she succeeded in securing a small but comfortable income for herself and her children. At last they were married the 8th of October, 1776, Lessing being forty-seven years old, and Eva seven or eight years younger. They set up their modest home in a small house connected with the library, "a quaint little building of a single story, roofed with red tiles,"—not a fashionable home, but one which Eva declares she would not exchange for a "palace in town," so highly she prized the privilege of being able to visit her husband at his work.

Letters remain from friends which testify to the happiness of their married life. The historian Spittler, then a young man, writes thus of three happy weeks spent with

the couple: "Without remarking it a visitor becomes so intimate with him (Lessing) that he almost forgets with what a great man he has to do; and if it were possible to find more humanity, still more active benevolence than in Lessing, it would be in Lessing's wife. Another such woman I never hope to know."

Mendelssohn writes (in reply to an invitation to visit them): "No kind of business shall prevent me. You now seem to me in a calmer, more satisfied position, which harmonizes infinitely better with my modes of thought than the clever but sometimes bitter humor I thought I remarked in you a few years ago. I was not strong enough to beat down the violence of this humor. . . . I must of necessity talk to you in this your better state of feeling, if it were only to learn what has most contributed to this change: your wife, or freemasonry? better reason, or riper years?"

And indeed it did seem as if a happy life were before them. Lessing's salary had been increased—although still small even for the time—and he had been made a member of the Mannheim Academy of Sciences, which assured him a pension of five hundred thalers (about three hundred and seventy-five dollars) yearly. It was not riches, but nevertheless with the wages (as we learn from one of Lessing's letters) of a good cook about twenty-two dollars and those of a housemaid about eight dollars a year, it was far from bitter poverty. The happy union lasted about fifteen months. Lessing was not, to use his own words, "to have things as well as other men." In January, 1778, Eva König died, some two weeks after the death of a son, who, born on Christmas eve, lived only one day. Lessing wrote to his brother:

"You will, I fear, never see me again as our friend Moses found me; so calm, so contented within my four walls." But within these walls Lessing's restless mind worked on, undaunted by grief or failing health. During the short period of time left to him (a little over three years) he produced some of the best controversial writings of his own and of all times, the "Anti-Göze Letters," and wrote his immortal masterpiece, "Nathan the Wise," reserved for interpretation, as it is the work which makes the name of Lessing a household word of German culture. This dramatic poem is the final utterance in the theological controversy with the Hamburg Hauptpastor (head pastor) Göze. In style and spirit it is very different from the "Anti-Göze Letters." They were written in reply to violent attacks upon an essay ("An Apology for Rational Worshipers of God") found among the papers of the late Professor Reimarus, and edited by Lessing as "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," a name by which these publications are generally known to students of German literature. While the fragments breathe the spirit of battle and the joy of victory, Nathan is intended, as we know from the author's statements, to be a peace-offering and an impartial discussion of religious truth. This stage sermon, as it might be called, was followed by the "Education of the Human Race," a more systematic treatise embodying Lessing's personal views of sacred history and of the religious progress of mankind. A summary and a prophecy, it may be considered a last legacy to the nation by one of her greatest sons and most valiant warriors in the fight for spiritual liberty and emancipation.

After a short illness, cheered by the tender care of his

loving step-daughter, Amelia König, Lessing died, at the age of fifty-two years, the 15th of February, 1781. The funeral expenses were paid by the Duke of Brunswick. Lessing died as he had lived, a poor man. His was a life of constant struggle. In reading its history we are moved, not by pity, but by admiration and a desire to be like him in strength and nobility of soul. We feel that we are confronted with an intellectual pioneer who thoroughly enjoyed the search for truth, and gloried in the defense of what he had recognized to be right. He was glad to find opposition—he even sought it; it seemed necessary to the best working of his mind. There is a word of Lessing's which has been quoted by every one who has written about him, and rightly. It is the motto of his life, and furnishes us with a key to the motives of this restless seeker after truth. Here it is: "Not the truth of which any one is, or supposes himself to be, possessed, but the upright endeavor he has made to arrive at truth, makes the worth of a man. For not by the possession, but by the investigation, of truth are his powers expanded, wherein alone his ever-growing perfection consists. Possession makes us easy, indolent, proud. If God held all truth shut in his right hand, and in his left hand nothing but the ever-restless instinct for truth, though with the condition of forever and ever erring, and should say to me 'Choose!' I should bow humbly to his left hand, and say, 'Father, give! pure truth is for thee alone!'"

**"NATHAN THE WISE"**

"Nathan the Wise" is a dramatic poem in five acts. It is written in the verse of Shakespeare, the English iambic pentameter, which has since become the usual form in the German drama.

The scene of the play is in Jerusalem. The first act introduces us to a hall in Nathan's house. Nathan returning from a business trip is met by Daja, a Christian woman who is living in the Jew's house as the companion of his daughter Recha. Daja tells Nathan that during his absence his house took fire and that Recha came within a hair's breadth of being burned to death. Nathan is but little moved by the possible loss of property. If the house had been leveled to the ground he would have built another and a better one. What arouses his passion, causing an outbreak of wildest excitement, is the thought of the danger by which his child Recha had been threatened. His child?

"And call you all  
That you possess with equal right your own?"

To this question of Daja's he replies:

"Naught with a greater. All I else possess  
Has been bestowed by Nature and by Fortune.  
This is the gift I owe to Virtue."

The reply is full of hidden meaning known to the speakers, and only divined by the hearers. Nathan diverts Daja's attention from the subject and from her apparent scruples of conscience by telling her about the stuffs and presents he has brought from Babylon and Damascus, and by enjoining her to be silent. Upon further inquiries he learns that Recha has been saved from certain death in

the flames by a Templar who, a prisoner, was pardoned by Sultan Saladin. A Templar, but no longer such to Recha. All approaches of Daja, all entreaties to induce him to see Recha and to receive her thanks, have been scornfully rejected. He has ceased to walk beneath the palms that shade the grave of the risen Lord, and no one knows his dwelling-place. What wonder that Recha yields to fancies:

“Her Templar, as she deems,  
Is not a mortal being, not of earth.  
One of the angels to whose guardian care  
Her little heart from childhood fondly thought  
Itself intrusted stepped from out the cloud  
Beneath whose veil he hitherto had hovered  
About her even in the fire, and stood  
Revealed as Templar.”

Daja, seeing Nathan smile at this report of hers, begs him not to destroy so beautiful a fancy, shared alike by Christian, Jew, and Mussulman. Nathan, however, resolves to seek the freakish guardian angel and conduct him to his house.

“Should then this sweet conceit  
Be changed to sweeter truth—for, trust me, Daja,  
To human heart more dear is man than angel—  
You’ll surely not with me—with me—be vexed,  
If so this angel-dreamer shall be cured.”

Here Recha herself comes. In passionate and poetical language she tells Nathan what he already knows, asking him to rejoice with her and to give thanks to God:

“He bore  
Your boat and you upon the unseen wings  
Of angels over all the faithless streams.”

(Nathan had crossed the Euphrates, Tigris, and Jordan.)

"He bade my angel visibly unfold  
His snowy wings, and bear me through the fire."

The wise Nathan does not destroy Recha's angel-dream by explaining the snowy wings as the Templar's white mantle (an explanation that he readily gives to himself), but says:

"Had but a human being, such a man  
As Nature daily grants, this service rendered,  
He must for you have been an angel."

Of course Recha refuses such an angel. God can work miracles for those that love him. She loves him. Why should God not work a miracle for her? This is logic. Nathan does not try to reject this conception, but to deepen it:

"The greatest miracle of all is this:  
That true and genuine miracles become  
Of no significance."

A miracle, he argues, is Recha's rescue by a human being, a miracle that the life of a captive Templar was spared by the sultan. This latter fact Recha seizes as proof that her rescuer was not a real Templar, and Daja, trying to discredit the rumor that Saladin preserved the Templar's life because of the resemblance he bore to a favorite brother, challenges Nathan by asking what harm there is in the belief that an angel rather than a man saved their lives, for

"Feel we not so much nearer brought to Him,  
Of the deliverance the mysterious cause?"

It is now that Nathan shows how Daja has failed to investigate what has become of the Templar after he "vanished," as she says, or "no longer showed himself

beneath the palms,"' as he would say. He pictures the possibility of his being sick, yea, even dying. He teaches

"That pious ecstasies are easier far  
Than virtuous deeds; how gladly idleness,  
Concealing its true motif from itself,  
Would stand excused from virtuous deeds, and plead  
Its pious ecstasies instead."

Daja is silenced. Recha is cured. "My father," she cries out in anguish:

"Leave, leave your Recha nevermore alone!"

While speaking Nathan has noticed a Mussulman who with curious eyes observes his loaded camels. It is his friend and antagonist at chess, the dervish Al Hafi. Al Hafi has become treasurer, or rather bookkeeper, of Sultan Saladin. Somewhat against his will "if one must," he reasons, and when interrupted by Nathan's often quoted words, "No man must" (*i. e.*, man is a free agent), he answers,

"What is desired of him  
In faith and honor, and he knows is right  
That must a dervish."

The statement of this truth, worthy of more general application, calls forth Nathan's enthusiastic approval:

"Let me embrace you, man, and call you friend!"

In the subsequent dialogue we hear of the great and generous Saladin who elevated Al Hafi to his present position of treasurer, or rather of almsgiver, because in belief his only a beggar, knowing the feelings of a beggar, is able to deal kindly with a beggar, and because he recognizes in him a kindred nature. Thus Al Hafi was lured into the net, the "silly bird," as he calls himself, the "fool of a fool," for

"Is it not foolery to try to ape  
The mercy of the Highest—who impartial  
On evil and on good, on field and waste  
Spreadeth himself abroad in sun and rain—  
Yet not to have the overflowing hand  
Of the Almighty?"

Before Nathan has time to ask about the Templar the dervish is gone. The desired information is, however, furnished to him by Daja, who, hastily entering, announces that Recha, having discovered from her window the knight beneath the palms, entreats her father to go to him without delay. Nathan (just from his camels) orders Daja to invite the Templar to come in, assuring her that it was his honor which forbade his entering the house during the father's absence. Daja reluctantly goes, although convinced that the Templar will not come to a Jew. Meanwhile the Templar has been addressed by a lay-brother, who naïvely states that he has been sent to sound the knight. The Patriarch, the head of the Christian Church at Jerusalem, would like to know why the knight was pardoned by the Sultan, why he alone? Further, whether he is the man for some great things, such as the safe delivery of a letter to King Philip (*i. e.*, Philip II of France, who with Frederick Barbarossa of Germany and Richard the Lion-hearted of England—both mentioned later as Frederick and Richard—undertook the Third Crusade) revealing Saladin's plan for the next campaign. Besides, a man like the Templar

"Can duly estimate—the Patriarch says —  
The strength and weakness of that inner wall  
Just built by Saladin; and can minutely  
Describe it to the soldiers of the Cross."

In short, the Patriarch wants the Templar to serve as a spy. Not enough, he offers him two pious Maronites (or saints) who have volunteered for Saladin's assassination, "if but some valiant man be found to lead them." The Patriarch's reasoning that "a villainy in man's esteem may not be one in God's," and that as long as Saladin is the enemy of Christianity, he cannot be the friend of any Christian, has, of course, no weight with the Templar, nor has it with the honest lay-brother, who simply obeys without questioning, and, relieved by the angry knight's refusal, cheerfully departs asking his forgiveness.

Certainly Daja, who has been watching from a distance, and now approaches, does not find the Templar in very good humor. His exclamation,

"Ah, excellent! The proverb holds—that monk  
And woman, woman and monk, are Satan's claws,"

does not promise a kindly reception. She tells of the return of Recha's father, alluding to the precious spices, stones, and stuffs that the wealthy Nathan brings home; she speaks of the esteem in which he is held by his people, who call him "the Wise," and of his goodness; then of herself, a Christian; of her husband, a noble squire in the German Emperor Frederick's army, to whom

"Had been accorded  
The glory of drowning in the selfsame stream  
With his Imperial Majesty,"

adds the impatient Templar, afraid of hearing an old story. His anger is thoroughly aroused; he does not want to be reminded of a deed done without a thought, and asks Daja not to make him hate the palms "'neath which he loved to walk.'

We have now met all the persons of the drama, except

the Patriarch, who, not a historical character, does not play an important part on the stage, and appears for a short time later on, and Saladin and Sittah. The second act opens with a game of chess between the Sultan and his sister in a room of the palace. Saladin loses the game. His mind is preoccupied. There is to be war again. He gladly would have had the truce renewed to carry out his peaceful plans; that is, to marry Sittah to Richard's brother and Richard's sister to his own brother Melech (Malek el Adel). Sittah laughs at these ideas. She knows the Christians, who before assenting to such a scheme would require her and Melech to take the Christian name, for

"Christianity, not manhood, is their pride,  
E'en that which from their founder down has spiced  
Their superstition with humanity,  
'Tis not for its humanity they love it.  
No; but because Christ taught, Christ practised it.  
Happy for them he was so good a man!  
Happy for them that they can trust his virtue!  
His virtue? Not his virtue but his name,  
They say, shall spread abroad, and shall devour  
And put to shame the names of all good men.  
The name, the name is all their pride."

But anyhow this is not a time for dreams, but for deeds. Matters of more material nature claim Saladin's immediate attention. Not even the near war. What presently disturbs him is the fact that his father, who lives on Mount Lebanon, is cramped for lack of (to use his own characteristic words)

"What else but that I hardly deign to name,  
Which, when I have, seems worthless, but when not,  
Is indispensable? . . .  
. . . . This fatal, cursed gold!"

In spite of this deplorable state of affairs Al Hafi, who just enters, is ordered to pay Sittah for the victory she gained at chess. A glance at the chess-board convinces the dervish that the game is not yet lost, but instead of listening to his demonstration Saladin overturns the board and repeats his order to pay. Al Hafi's angry reply, "As 'twas won, it will be paid," leads to the revelation of the fact that instead of receiving her brother's generous gifts Sittah has been supporting the whole court. Saladin embraces his sister, and commands the dervish to get gold of whom he can, without borrowing of those whom he (the sultan) has made rich. As Al Hafi knows of no people answering this description, Sittah reminds him of the much-praised Jew, the wise, the rich. The dervish is embarrassed. His friend Nathan is intelligent; he knows how to live; he is strong at chess; he gives to the poor, and in doing so, he is a match for Saladin, just as free from all distinction (Mussulmans, Parsee, Christian, Jew, being all one to him)—all this the dervish grants, nevertheless he concludes his account: "In all else he is good . . . . but not to lend," and hastens away to knock at the door of a rich, miserly Moor.

After his departure Sittah, mistrusting Al Hafi's somewhat conflicting statements, devises an ignoble plan for testing the Jewish trader. Before hearing any more about the details of this scheme, we return to Nathan's house. Near the palms in the open square before it we meet Recha and Nathan in conversation.

"But promise me,  
If but your heart declare itself more plainly,  
No wish of it shall be concealed from me,"

he pleads, and Recha easily consents. Nathan is now

prepared to meet the Templar, whom he finds still walking beyond the palms. He is not frightened away by offensive words, but through the rugged exterior he sees the noble soul. Imputing to the Templar's obstinate refusal to visit Recha a noble motive, he calls forth from the young knight the remark: "I must confess you know the motives that ought to be a Templar's." This answer gives to Nathan the welcome opportunity to win the Templar by opening a discussion, the essential points of which are given in the passages subsequently quoted:

Only a Templar's?

Ought only—and because his Order bids?

I know a good man's motives, and I know

Good men are everywhere.

*Templar.* With no distinction?

*Nathan.* Distinguished by their color, form, and dress.

*Templar.* Not more or less in one place than another?

*Nathan.* All such distinctions are of small account.

Let not one

Cast slurs upon the others. Knots and gnarls

Must live on friendly terms. One little peak

Must not take airs, as 'twere the only one

Not sprung from earth.

*Templar.* Well said! But know you, Nathan,

What people practised first this casting slurs—

What people were the first to call themselves

The chosen people? How if I—not hate,

Indeed—but cannot help despising them

For all their pride—a pride which has descended

To Mussulman and Christian—that their God

Must be the one true God? You start to hear

Such words from me, a Christian and a Templar,

When, where, has this fanaticism of having

The better God, and forcing him as best

On all the world, e'er showed itself in colors

More black than here and now? Who, here and now,  
Feels not his eyes unsealed—but be he blind  
Who will! Forget what I have said, and leave me. [*Going.*]  
*Nathan.* You know not how much closer you have  
drawn me.

We must, we must be friends! Despise my people  
With all your heart. We neither chose our people.  
Are we our people? What does "people" mean?  
Is Jew or Christian rather Jew or Christian  
Than man? May I have found in you another  
Who is content to be esteemed a man!

*Templar.* You have, by heaven, you have! Your hand!  
I blush  
That for a moment I should have misjudged you.

• • • •  
We must indeed be friends.

*Nathan.* Are so already.  
How Recha will rejoice! And ah, how bright  
The future opens to me! Only know her!  
*Templar.* I'm burning with impatience.

At this moment Daja enters hastily, telling Nathan that the Sultan wants to see him, to speak with him in person. Nathan, after repeating his invitation to come to his house, asks the Templar's name. The reply, "Curd von Stauffen," arouses in Nathan's mind recollections and questions which he reserves for later investigation. He admonishes Daja to use caution and circumspection in all she asks and tells, and is on the point of going when Al Hafi appears. On hearing about Nathan's summons the dervish tries to dissuade him from going to the Sultan. He himself will not stay to see how the Sultan will "borrow, borrow, and borrow," draining the marrow of Nathan "down to the very toes," and bids farewell to his friend in order to return to his Ghebers beside the Ganges River,

resolved to live for himself, and not to remain the slave of others.

The opening scene of the third act, in a room in Nathan's house, begins with the conversation between Recha and Daja, which is interrupted by the Templar, and that fortunately, for Daja, in spite of Nathan's warning and her own better judgment, was on the verge of disclosing all she knew about Recha. The meeting between Recha and the Templar (whom Daja would have liked so much to unite in holy Christian matrimony) has kindled in the Templar's breast the admiration which Nathan predicted, and another sentiment which fills his soul with anxious forebodings:

“There is danger;  
Believe me, there is danger if I stay.  
. . . Danger to myself, to you,  
To him, unless I quickly, quickly go.”

With these significant words he goes, leaving Recha, who on her part somewhat disappoints her companion Daja by stating:

“He will be always dear to me, far dearer  
Than life itself; though at his name my pulse  
No longer varies, and my heart no longer  
Beats harder, faster, when I think of him.”

There is quite a different scene in the audience hall in Saladin's palace. Sittah prepares her brother for the battle with Nathan. The Sultan is not very much in sympathy with his sister's device to “frighten money from a Jew.” She allays, however, his wavering mind by representing her plot as harmless, as the snare is laid only for the usurious, timid Jew, not for the wise and

good man (described by the dervish) who would easily extricate himself. Saladin yields, though fearing that his "clumsy hands . . . will break this keen and subtle thing."

As Sittah leaves by one door Nathan enters by another. At the close of this first encounter Saladin, in accordance with the planned trick, requests the Jew to tell him confidentially what belief has most commended itself to his judgment, as of the three religions (the Jewish, the Mahomedan, and the Christian) only one can be true, and as a wise man like Nathan "stands not where accident of birth has cast him." With the promise to return soon Saladin goes into the adjoining room where Sittah had entered before. Nathan is left alone. He has come "prepared for money," but what the Sultan wants is truth. He does not like to think that this abrupt request is a snare, nevertheless he decides to be on his guard and to answer with a fable.

The succeeding dialogue between Saladin and Nathan contains the now world-famed parable of the three rings. To illustrate its lesson, the poem was written. Its central position lets the remainder of the drama almost appear as framework, as the setting for the jewel. It is for this reason that the scene is given here in full:

*Act III. Scene 7*

*Saladin and Nathan. [The coast is clear.]\**

*Saladin.* I'm not returned too soon for you, I hope;  
You've brought your meditations to a close?  
*Speak, then; no soul can hear us.*  
*Nathan.* I am willing  
The world should hear us.

\* Meaning: Sittah is gone.

*Saladin.*                           Nathan is so sure  
Of his good cause? Ah, that I call a sage;  
Never to hide the truth; to stake on it  
Your all; your soul and body, goods and life.

*Nathan.* When necessary it shall be, and useful.

*Saladin.* With right I hope henceforth to bear my title,  
Reformer of the world and of the law.

*Nathan.* A noble title, certainly. Yet, Sultan,  
Ere I bestow my perfect confidence,  
Permit me to relate a story to you.

*Saladin.* Why not? I ever have been fond of stories  
Well told.

*Nathan.* The telling well I do not promise.

*Saladin.* Again so proudly modest! Come, your story!

*Nathan.* In gray antiquity there lived a man  
In Eastern lands, who had received a ring  
Of priceless worth from a beloved hand.  
Its stone, an opal, flashed a hundred colors,  
And had the secret power of giving favor,  
In sight of God and man, to him who wore it  
With a believing heart. What wonder then  
This Eastern man would never put the ring  
From off his finger, and should so provide  
That to his house it be preserved forever?  
Such was the case. Unto the best beloved  
Among his sons he left the ring, enjoining  
That he in turn bequeath it to the son  
Who should be dearest; and the dearest ever,  
In virtue of the ring, without regard  
To birth, be of the house the prince and head.  
You understand me, Sultan?

*Saladin.*                           Yes; go on!

*Nathan.* From son to son the ring descending, came  
To one, the sire of three; of whom all three  
Were equally obedient; whom all three  
He therefore must with equal love regard.  
And yet from time to time, now this, now that,  
And now the third,—as each alone was by,

The others not dividing his fond heart—  
Appeared to him the worthiest of the ring;  
Which then, with loving weakness, he would promise  
To each in turn. Thus it continued long.  
But he must die; and then the loving father  
Was sore perplexed. It grieved him thus to wound  
Two faithful sons who trusted in his word;  
But what to do? In secrecy he calls  
An artist to him, and commands of him  
Two other rings, the pattern of his own;  
And bids him neither cost nor pains to spare  
To make them like, precisely like to that.  
The artist's skill succeeds. He brings the rings,  
And e'en the father cannot tell his own.  
Relieved and joyful, summons he his sons,  
Each by himself; to each one by himself  
He gives his blessing, and his ring—and dies—  
You listen, Sultan?

*Saladin [who, somewhat perplexed, has turned away].*

Yes; I hear, I hear.

But bring your story to an end.

Nathan.

'Tis ended;

For what remains would tell itself. The father  
Was scarcely dead, when each brings forth his ring,  
And claims the headship. Questioning ensues,  
Strife, and appeal to law; but all in vain.

The genuine ring was not to be distinguished—

[After a pause, in which he awaits the Sultan's answer.]

As undistinguishable as with us

## The true religion.

*Saladin.* That your answer to me?

*Nathan.* But my apology for not presuming  
Between the rings to judge, which with design  
The father ordered undistinguishable.

*Saladin.* The rings? You trifle with me. The religions I named to you are plain to be distinguished— . E'en in the dress, e'en in the food and drink.

*Nathan.* In all except the grounds on which they rest.  
Are they not founded all on history,  
Traditional or written? History  
Can be accepted only upon trust.

Whom now are we the least inclined to doubt?  
Not our own people—our own blood; not those  
Who from our childhood up have proved their love;  
Ne'er disappointed, save when disappointment  
Was wholesome to us? Shall my ancestors  
Receive less faith from me than yours from you?  
Reverse it: Can I ask you to belie  
Your fathers, and transfer your faith to mine?  
Or yet, again, holds not the same with Christians?

*Saladin.* (By heaven, the man is right! I've naught to answer.)

*Nathan.* Return we to our rings. As I have said,  
The sons appealed to law, and each took oath  
Before the judge that from his father's hand  
He had the ring—as was indeed the truth;  
And had received his promise long before,  
One day the ring, with all its privileges,  
Should be his own—as was not less the truth.  
The father could not have been false to him,  
Each one maintained; and rather than allow  
Upon the memory of so dear a father  
Such stain to rest, he must against his brothers,  
Though gladly he would nothing but the best  
Believe of them, bring charge of treachery;  
Means would he find the traitors to expose  
And be revenged on them.

*Saladin.* And now the judge?  
I long to hear what words you give the judge.  
Go on!

*Nathan.* Thus spoke the judge: Produce your father  
At once before me, else from my tribunal  
Do I dismiss you. Think you I am here  
To guess your riddles? Either would you wait  
Until the genuine ring shall speak?—But hold!

A magic power in the true ring resides,  
As I am told, to make its wearer loved—  
Pleasing to God and man. Let that decide.  
For in the false can no such virtue lie.  
Which one among you, then, do two love best?  
Speak! Are you silent? Work the rings but backward,  
Not outward? Loves each one himself the best?  
Then cheated cheats are all of you! The rings  
All three are false. The genuine ring was lost;  
And to conceal, supply the loss, the father  
Made three in place of one.

*Saladin.*                                    Oh, excellent!

*Nathan.* Go, therefore, said the judge, unless my  
counsel

You'd have in place of sentence. It were this:  
Accept the case exactly as it stands.  
Had each his ring directly from his father,  
Let each believe his own is genuine.  
'Tis possible your father would no longer  
His house to one ring's tyranny subject;  
And certain that all three of you he loved,  
Loved equally, since two he would not humble,  
That one might be exalted. Let each one  
To his unbought, impartial love aspire;  
Each with the others vie to bring to light  
The virtue of the stone within his ring;  
Let gentleness, a hearty love of peace,  
Beneficence, and perfect trust in God,  
Come to its help. Then if the jewel's power  
Among your children's children be revealed,  
I bid you in a thousand, thousand years  
Again before this bar. A wiser man  
Than I shall occupy this seat, and speak.  
Go! Thus the modest judge dismissed them.

*Saladin.* God!

*Nathan.* If therefore, Saladin, you feel yourself  
That promised, wiser man—

*Saladin [rushing to him, and seizing his hand, which he holds to the end].*

I? Dust!—I? Naught!

O God!

*Nathan.* What moves you, Sultan?

*Saladin.* Nathan, Nathan!

Not ended are the thousand, thousand years  
Your judge foretold; not mine to claim his seat.  
Go, go!—But be my friend.

*Nathan.* No further orders

Has Saladin for me?

*Saladin.* None.

*Nathan.* None?

*Saladin.* No, none.

Why ask?

*Nathan.* An opportunity I sought  
To proffer a request.

*Saladin.* Needs a request  
An opportunity? Speak!

*Nathan.* I'm returned  
From distant journeyings to collect my debts.  
Of ready money I've too much on hand.  
Times grow again uncertain. Scarce I know  
Where safely to dispose it; and I thought  
That you, perhaps, since more is always needed  
For an approaching war, might mine employ.

*Saladin [fixing his eyes upon him].*  
I will not ask you, Nathan, if Al Hafi  
Has been already with you—will not ask  
If no suspicion prompts this willing offer—

*Nathan.* Suspicion?

*Saladin,* I deserve it; but forgive me!  
Why seek to hide it? Frankly, 'twas my purpose—

*Nathan.* Not to ask me the same?

*Saladin.* It was indeed.

*Nathan.* Then can we both be served. This Templar  
only

Prevents my sending you my whole supply.

You know the Templar. I've a heavy debt  
That first must be discharged to him.

*Saladin.*                                   A Templar?  
You surely do not with your gold support  
My bitterest foes?

*Nathan.*                                   I speak but of the one  
Whose life you spared.

*Saladin.*                                   What bring you to my mind!  
The youth I'd utterly forgot. You know him?  
Where is he?

*Nathan.*                                   Know you not how much your grace  
Has flowed through him on me? His new-found life  
He risked to save my daughter from the fire.

*Saladin.* Ah, did he so? He looked like such an one.  
So had my brother done, whom he resembles.  
Is he still here? Conduct him hither to me.  
So often have I spoken to my sister  
Of this her brother whom she never knew,  
She must behold his image. Go, go find him!  
From one good deed, though born of naught but passion,  
How many other noble deeds will spring!  
Go find him!

*Nathan.*                                   Instantly! It stands agreed  
About the other. [Goes.]

*Saladin.*                                   Ah, why let I not  
My sister listen? To her, to her now!  
How shall I ever tell her of it all?

[Goes out in the opposite direction.]

In the grove of palms near the convent the Templar awaits Nathan's return from the Sultan. A violent inner conflict has convinced him that life apart from Recha is no longer conceivable, is death; that "the Templar loves —the Christian loves the Jewess." Nathan comes. He asks: "Say, how does Recha please you?" The Templar throwing himself on Nathan's neck bursts out: "My father!" Nathan is surprised. His utterance: "Ere I

know what Stauffen was your father," is construed by the young knight as doubt cast upon his pedigree. In this confusion and uneasiness of mind he is found by Daja. When she hears that the Templar's wooing has been rather coldly received, she reveals to him the secret that Nathan is not Recha's father. The fact that Recha was born a Christian, and is brought up, believing herself a Jewess—a truth which often has cost Daja tears of blood—does not make a deep impression upon the liberal Templar. Gradually, however, this revelation becomes more significant to him as he reasons that in case of Nathan's refusal he may wrest his daughter from him by force. In this mood of mind the Templar approaching the cloisters of the monastery meets the lay-brother.—This meeting forms the opening scene of the fourth act. As he tells him that he has come to ask the patriarch's counsel, the latter, a "red, fat, jolly prelate," advances in great pomp on one side of the cloisters. The patriarch expresses his pleasure at seeing so gallant a young man, "an honor and a gain to the cause of God." Without giving any names, the Templar tells what we know. He alleviates the fact by dwelling upon the peculiar circumstances of the case, upon the rescue of the child from sure death, upon the noble character of the foster-father, but is always interrupted by the bigoted patriarch: "It matters not; the Jew goes to the stake!" Expressing his regret that he has no greater leisure to enjoy so excellent a sermon, as Saladin has summoned him, the Templar as he goes away leaves the church dignitary under the impression that the tale about the Jew is a problem, "yet one that must be sifted to the bottom." The next scene leads us back to the sultan's palace. A number of slaves

bring into the room the bags of money sent by Nathan. Sittah holds out a miniature she has found which Saladin recognizes as the picture of his brother Assad, the "noble boy so early lost." Comparing with it the face of the Templar who just enters, he finds in him "Assad o'er again in form and soul," even in the passionate and unjust indictment of Nathan. Saladin promises to clear away all differences between his two friends, to assist the knight in his suit, and to let the Jew pay the penalty for "keeping a Christian child from eating pork." Sittah, sitting upon the sofa, her face veiled and partly averted, has been a silent witness. She is full of sympathy for the handsome knight. "Who preserved her life alone can claim the rights of him who gave it," she argues, and persuades her brother to place the maiden under his own protection, and to give her permission to send for Recha.—From the palace we return to Nathan's house. In the open court some of the wares mentioned in the first scene of the drama are still lying about unpacked. As in the beginning of the first act Daja revels in the silken stuffs, especially in a wedding dress, golden vines on ground of silver. She thinks it intended for Recha. Being advised that it is meant for her she refuses to accept it or any further gifts, unless Nathan swear to seize the opportunity granted by heaven in the Templar's love, and by giving Recha to him, restore her to Christianity. While Nathan remonstrates with Daja, dismissing her as on similar occasions with the request to have patience, the lay-brother comes. He is commissioned by the patriarch to ferret out the Jew who has committed the unpardonable sin of averting a Christian girl from her faith. But the lay-brother's con-

science has been aroused. He has begun to mistrust the patriarch, who esteems Nathan's deed the very sin against the Holy Ghost, the greatest of all sins, "though, thank God, we know not well in what that sin consists." In meditating upon the affair suspicion has come to the lay-brother that he himself may have furnished the occasion for this sin. And so it is. The conversation with Nathan brings evidence that Recha is the daughter of Wolf von Filnek, who sent the poor baby to his friend Nathan through his groom, the present lay-brother. Nathan took the child. It was at Darun. In the near Gath the Christians just before had murdered all the Jews, among them Nathan's wife and seven hopeful sons.

*Nathan.* Three days and nights I'd lain  
In dust and ashes before God and wept,  
When you arrived. Wept? I had wrestled hard  
At times with God; had stormed and raved; had cursed  
Myself and all the world; had sworn a hate  
Against the Christians, unappeasable.

*Lay-brother.* I can believe it!

*Nathan.* Gradually my reason  
Returned to me. She spoke with gentle voice:  
"And yet God is; e'en this was God's decree!  
Up, then! and practise what you've long believed.  
To practise cannot be more difficult  
Than to believe, if you but will. Rise up!"  
I stood erect and cried to God: "I will!  
Oh, will thou that I will!"—Dismounting then,  
You handed me the child, wrapped in your cloak.  
All that you said to me, or I to you,  
Has been forgot. I know but this: I took  
The child; I laid it on my bed; I kissed it;  
I threw myself upon my knees, and sobbed,  
"O God! of seven, thou grantest me one again!"

*Lay-brother.* You are a Christian, Nathan! Yes, by heaven,

You are a Christian! Never was a better!

*Nathan.* What makes of me a Christian in your eyes,  
Makes you in mine a Jew. Happy for both!

But let us not unman each other longer.

This calls for deeds. Although a sevenfold love  
Soon bound me to this stranger girl—

Although the thought of losing all my sons  
Again in her is death—if Providence

Should claim her back from me, I will obey.

The lay-brother cannot give any information about Recha's kith and kin, but remembers a breviary which he took from his master's breast the day he was buried at Askalon. He has been told that this little book contains the family record. Of course this is the very thing wanted. While the lay-brother goes to fetch it, Daja tells Nathan that princess Sittah has sent for Recha. Daja is greatly troubled over this summons. She fears that the Christian Templar may lose Recha to the Mussulman Saladin, and resolves to tell the girl her story. In the fifth act all the difficulties that have arisen find a speedy solution. Saladin receives the long-expected money from Egypt, sends half of it to his distressed father in Lebanon, and returns the loan. The Templar repenting of the communication made to the patriarch in a fit of passion apologizes to Nathan and finds forgiveness. Recha, though greatly disturbed by the news that she is not Nathan's daughter, shows her foster-father's broad-mindedness in exonerating her companion:

"She is a Christian, and from very love  
Must torture me. She is of those fanatics  
Who think themselves they know the universal, true,  
And only road to God. . . .

And feel a charge upon them to conduct  
The feet of every wanderer thitherward.  
They scarce can otherwise. If it be true  
This is the only road that leads aright,  
Can they resign themselves to see their friends  
Advancing on another which descends  
To death, eternal death?"

In the last scene by means of the lay-brother's breviary Nathan proves that Recha is the sister of the Templar; that the Templar is the son of Saladin's brother Assad, who under the assumed name of Wolf von Filnek, married a Stauffen, and went with her to Germany; and that the latter's brother, Curd von Stauffen, adopted the Templar as his son after Wolf's return to the East. Including—and how could we do otherwise—Recha's foster-father Nathan, we find the three religions of the ring story represented in this remarkable family, all the members of which are distinguished by noble traits of character.

"I must see whether they will let me preach undisturbed in my own pulpit, the theater." These words of Lessing, uttered after having been compelled to give up the theological controversy, explain sufficiently the purpose of the poem. It is a sermon in dramatic form. The hero, the preacher, is a Jew.

"Has not Christianity  
Its root in Judaism? It oft has vexed,  
Provoked me e'en to tears, to see how Christians  
Forget our Savior was himself a Jew."

Like the lay-brother in this remark Lessing preached to Christians the lesson of tolerance and humanity. "Nathan the Wise," though written for its time and with a tendency, ranks with the greatest productions of German, or better, of general, literature. Even our own

times have seen atrocious persecutions of the Jews. As long as this can happen among Christian nations, the lesson that Lessing preached has not yet been fully learned. The bearer of the message is a Hebrew, the message itself, though in the main indorsed by the best representatives of other beliefs, is essentially Christian. The words which the Son of Man sitting upon the throne of His glory addresses to the nations gathered before Him, when He divides the sheep from the goats, are in perfect harmony (and breathe the same spirit) with the answer given to the question What is the essential elements in all religion? in "Nathan the Wise." The name of the writer will live as long as religion has a place in the thinking mind and heart of man.





JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

## CHAPTER IV

GOETHE: "HERMANN AND DOROTHEA," THE  
MODERN GERMAN EPIC

1749-1804

We owe to genius always the same debt, of lifting the curtain from the common, and showing us that divinities are sitting disguised in the seeming gang of gypsies and peddlers.—*Emerson.*

If a history of World Literature should be written dealing only with writers of literary masterpieces, without some knowledge of which a man's culture, to whatever nationality he belong, cannot be considered well rounded or complete, because they form an inherent and permanent contribution to the accumulated stock of the world's thought and progress—if, I say, such a history should be written, the figure of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe would stand out in bold relief. His would be a commanding position, such as he held during his lifetime whenever and wherever he chose to assert his natural birthright. A phenomenal intellect, as comprehensive as creative, combined with rare physical beauty of form and face, reflecting an independent life free from sordid care and toil—we understand the deep import of Napoleon's spontaneous words on seeing Goethe for the first time: Behold a man! (Voilà un homme!)

Born on the 28th of August, 1749, in the old city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, his early environment was suited to broaden the horizon of a naturally active mind. Frank-

fort-on-the-Main, now annexed to Prussia, was then a free city. In the cathedral which has been lately restored, the German emperors of the Holy Roman Empire were crowned by the Elector of Mainz. Goethe himself witnessed (and minutely described) the coronation of Joseph II on the 3d of April, 1764. Here was also the famous Hall of the Romans ("Römer, Römersaal"), sometimes called the Imperial or the Electoral Hall ("Kaisersaal," "Wahlsaal"), full of legendary and historical interest. From Goethe's autobiographical "Fact and Fiction" (the title would be more accurately rendered by "From my Life; Poetry and Truth") which appeared in four portions, 1811, 1812, 1814, and 1831, and which may be regarded as giving, in the main, an authentic account of his life up to the time of his going to Weimar, we gather that among the events which especially stamped themselves upon his boyish memory were the earthquake of Lisbon, when he was only six years old, the remodeling of the ancestral home, and the occupancy of Frankfort by French troops during the Seven Years' War, which had broken out when he was seven years of age. He tells us that he was a Fritzian (Fritz was the popular name of Frederick the Great) like his father, while his maternal grandfather, who had borne the coronation canopy over Francis I, sided with Austria and the Empress Maria Theresa. Goethe's father was a lawyer by profession, an upright, learned, but somewhat pedantic and austere, man. He was well versed in art and literature, and sufficiently wealthy to be entirely independent, although he held the dignified title of imperial councilor. At the mature age of thirty-eight he had married the seventeen-year-old daughter of the chief magistrate of the city, Katharine

Elizabeth Textor. Goethe's mother, the beloved "Frau Aja," was a woman of a genial disposition, full of hope and the joy of life. She was but eighteen years older than her illustrious son, to whom she sustained the double relation of a beloved parent and of a charming companion. (She is said to have been the original of the mother in the poem of "Hermann and Dorothea," selected for interpretation in this chapter.) Goethe's own conception of his heredity—that is, of his personal inheritance of parental characteristics—is succinctly stated in those often-quoted verses which ascribe his bodily stature and his serious conduct of life to his father, his cheerful temperament and his poetical inclination, or as he terms it, his desire of telling fanciful stories ("Lust zu fabulieren"), to his mother. His maternal inheritance early manifested itself. When a very small boy he used to hold his companions spellbound by his stories.

All through his long life Goethe was highly susceptible to the influence of women. Even before he was sixteen, he fell in love with a young girl who figures in "Fact and Fiction" as Gretchen. She was a girl of the people, both good and sensible. Older than himself, she looked upon him as a mere boy. This he learned to his deep chagrin when the discovery of the romance by his parents brought about its speedy conclusion.

In 1765, shortly after his sixteenth birthday, he matriculated as student of law at the University of Leipzig. Up to this time his education had been conducted by his father, aided by private teachers. The student life of Goethe bears a certain resemblance to that of Lessing, who nineteen years earlier had entered the same university. Both were obliged, in deference to paternal

wishes, to study for professions for which they had no natural inclination; both neglected what we should call their "majors" for literature; both wrote poems and plays, and led somewhat wild lives, although the son of the royal councilor was no doubt admitted into many circles of which the son of the poor clergyman knew nothing. In his autobiography, referred to as "Fact and Fiction," Goethe says that he attended lectures regularly for some months, but soon determined that philosophy did not enlighten him; as for logic, he states that it seemed a senseless waste of time to dissect operations which he had always performed with ease. The scene between the student and Mephistopheles in "Faust" harks back to these days. Among the directing influences of Leipzig was his acquaintance with Öser, the Director of the Academy of Design, at whose room in the old castle of Pleissenburg he passed many a happy hour in conversation which instilled into his soul a deep reverence for Winckelmann, and a genuine love of art. Indeed, at one time he even contemplated becoming a painter. It was then that he conceived a tender attachment for one Annette Schönkopf (Ännchen), the daughter of the wine-merchant with whom he took his meals. He, however, so tormented her by his jealousy that he soon saw himself supplanted in her affections by a friend. From this experience arose his play "The Caprices of a Lover." After three years' stay the young Goethe was obliged to leave Leipzig on account of sickness.

The time of his recovery, over a year, was spent in Frankfort, where he came under the influence of a friend of his mother's, Fräulein von Klettenberg (the "beautiful soul" of the sixth book of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprentice-

ship"). He also dabbled in alchemy and chemistry (reminiscences of which studies occur in his "Faust").

On his return to health he resumed his academical studies, this time at Strassburg. Here a new life opened before him; in the shadow of the beautiful minster, and among the narrow streets where the ghosts of the mediæval world seemed still to linger, Goethe's genius asserted itself. Even in Strassburg it cannot be said that Goethe became a diligent student of law. His energies were directed to literature. He made the acquaintance of Herder, by whom he was invited to study Shakespeare and other English authors. Herder was just collecting material for his "Voices of the Nations in Songs," and Goethe, on his excursions in Alsatia, picked up many folksongs for his friend. Some of these he used himself, as for instance, the "Sweet Briar Rose," which in the altered form given to it by the poet, is known and sung wherever the German language is spoken and German song is cherished.

In speaking of his writings, Goethe says: "I have never affected anything in poetry; I have never written anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production. I composed love songs when I was in love." This brief sketch accordingly contemplates such works of Goethe as are intimately connected with his life, work in which his personal experiences, passing through the powerful alembic of his genius, have become typical and universal. Some of the most spontaneous of his lyrical productions were inspired by Frederica Brion, daughter of a pastor at Sesenheim, a village near Strassburg. Frederica was eighteen, very sweet and attractive in her rustic costume, and Goethe fell in love

at first sight—the most natural thing for a student of twenty.

“I saw thee, and with tender pride  
Felt thy sweet gaze pour joy on me;  
While all my heart was at thy side,  
And every breath I breathed for thee.  
The roseate hues that spring supplies  
Were playing round thy features fair,  
And love for me—ye Deities!  
I hope it, I deserved it ne'er!”

However true these verses ring, quoted from “Welcome and Farewell,” one of the songs which have immortalized this little Alsatian girl, they are the expression of a fleeting passion. In August, 1771, Goethe passed his examinations and returned to Frankfort as licentiate of law. Soon after he wrote to Frederica, breaking off their relation—a step which caused him much pain and Frederica a serious illness. Eight years later he revisited Sesenheim and made his peace with Frederica and her family. The inception of “*Götz von Berlichingen*,” the play which established Goethe’s claims as dramatist, dates from Strassburg, and although not written until after his return to his native city, is connected with the Sesenheim episode. *Götz von Berlichingen*, with the Iron Hand, is historical. He was a feudal knight of the fifteenth century who sacrificed his life to his conception of right and liberty. Maria, his noble sister, is avowedly modeled after Frederica Brion; her faithless lover Weisslingen perishes. Recollections of Frederica are also recognizable in “*Clavigo*,” a play published a year later, in 1774.

In 1772 Goethe went as Practitioner in the Imperial Chamber, to Wetzlar. Here he made the acquaintance of Charlotte Buff, a young lady in whom an en-

thusiastic love of poetry was united with an engaging domesticity. The society of this healthy and joyous young girl, who was betrothed to his friend Kestner, awoke in Goethe a sentiment which decided him to leave Wetzlar at the end of six months. About this time he heard of the suicide of a young man, Jerusalem by name, caused by a hopeless passion for a young married woman. Interweaving this incident with his own relation to the betrothed of his friend, Goethe composed his "*Sorrows of Werther*." To suppose, however, that Charlotte Buff and the Lotte of the novel are identical would be an error. Indeed, in the latter part of the book, some traits of Marianne Brentano, daughter of the novelist Sophie Laroche are reproduced; the character of Albert, Lotte's husband, is also—and to a far greater degree—a compound for which Kestner and Marianne's husband, the Italian Brentano, were the studies. In form "*Werther*" is epistolary—a style in vogue at the time. It is the story of "a mind diseased." Nevertheless, its sentimental young hero, in his blue coat and yellow waistcoat, still holds our attention. We smile in this materialistic age at his weakness, but it is a smile akin to tears. In its day the novel created a sensation; imitations sprang up like mushrooms; it was translated into other languages. Napoleon is said to have carried a copy in his pocket. The *Werther* costume became fashionable, suicide also—and in the preface to the second edition its author considered a word of advice not out of place. By this book Goethe freed his own soul from mental disquiet and from the sentimentalism of the age.

After his second return to Frankfort he had become engaged to Anna Elizabeth Schönemann, "Lili," a beauti-

ful girl of sixteen, belonging to the fashionable society of the city. But in the gay circles in which "Lili" shone, Goethe found no lasting pleasure. The engagement was broken by mutual consent without serious consequences on either side. Literature owes to this connection one of the rarest gems of erotic poetry; the song entitled "New Love, New Life," the closing stanza of which in the original is noted for its beauty of sound and rhythm:

"By a thread I ne'er can sever,  
For 'tis twined with magic skill,  
Doth the cruel maid forever  
Hold me fast against my will.  
While those magic charms confine me,  
To her will I must resign me.  
Ah, the change in truth is great!  
Love! kind love! release me straight!"

With the "Sorrows of Werther," published in 1774, Goethe left the Storm and Stress Period behind him; the year 1775, in which "Lili" is the central figure, may be regarded as forming the close of his own first literary period.

In 1775 Goethe accepted the invitation of the young Duke Karl August to visit him at his court in Weimar. The visit became a residence, and henceforth Goethe's activity was connected with this little town on the Ilm which soon became the cynosure of all lovers of literature. The next year he was made privy councilor, and until his Italian journey (1786-1788) a great part of his time was consumed by duties connected with various official positions. He directed the reopening of the mines in Ilmenau, the building of roads, and took an active interest in agriculture and forestry—serving his sovereign with

untiring devotion and attaining, no doubt, through the discipline of his daily duties, greater balance of character and broader views of life. In addition to this many-sided activity he was the chief figure of the intellectual circle gathered around the Duchess Dowager Amalia. The poet Wieland had been called to Weimar several years before. Through Goethe's influence Herder was appointed court preacher, and added to the circle. Several of Goethe's works, later recast, originated during this period of social and official cares, as the prose version of "Iphigenie" which was played before the Weimar court, Goethe himself taking the part of Orestes. Many beautiful lyrics owe their existence to the court lady who is indissolubly connected with the name of the great German poet. Charlotte von Stein (six years Goethe's senior, and mother of seven children) was not strictly beautiful, but of an attractive personality; and though somewhat reserved in her bearing, she was highly sympathetic towards all that was best in art and literature. With this gifted woman Goethe shared his thoughts, to her he read his productions, accepting her suggestions and inspired by her intelligent appreciation. Varying constructions have been put upon this relation—the most probable, and that now held by the majority of Goethe scholars, is, that it was an attachment passionate indeed on Goethe's side, but not transgressing the ethical standards of the times. Goethe was held in high esteem by all, especially by the good Dowager Duchess Amalia. Frau von Stein retained the respect of her husband and of society. That such a hopeless relation could not always satisfy the young poet is evident; a note of deep sadness breathes through gems of rare beauty like the following:

“Hush’d on the hill  
Is the breeze;  
Scarce by the zephyr  
The trees  
Softly are press’d;  
The woodbird’s asleep on the bough.  
Wait, then, and thou  
Soon wilt find rest.”

In the early fall of 1786 Goethe started on a journey which extended over a year and a half. The greater part of this time was spent in Rome, the city of which his Tasso savs:

“Ay, and in that first city of the world,  
Hath not each site, yea, ev’ry stone a tongue?  
How many thousand silent monitors,  
With earnest mien, majestic beckon us!  
There if I fail to make my work complete,  
I never shall complete it.”

About thirty years later Goethe published a description of this journey under the title of “Italian Journey,” a book compiled from diaries and letters written from Italy to Frau von Stein. Some of Goethe’s commentators have attributed to this stay in Italy an almost complete metamorphosis of character and style. A close examination of his writings does not bear out this view. The change in form from the Gothic splendor of his earlier work to the calm Hellenic beauty of his later writings was gradual, an evolution rather than a change. From his diaries it may be seen that for a long time previous the aim of his life had been to become master of himself; freed from the duties of society and office his soul rejoiced in the freedom and beauty of the life which now opened before his eyes. In Rome he soon became the center of a small group of artists, among whom was the Swiss Johann

Heinrich Meyer (born in Schiller's birth year, died in Goethe's death year), who afterwards lived in Weimar with Goethe and painted Christiane Vulpius with her boy in her arms as *Madonna della Sedia*, the German Tischbein, who sketched the well-known caricature of Goethe, and Angelica Kaufmann, whose pictures are represented in the principal galleries of London and the Continent. Before leaving Weimar Goethe had made arrangements for a new edition of his works. Side by side with his art studies he applied himself to remodeling the manuscript plays which he had taken with him on his journey. His "*Iphigenie on Tauris*" received its final form of blank verse; "*Egmont*" was completed; and "*Torquato Tasso*" nearly so, although not published until 1790. He also worked in a somewhat desultory fashion on his "*Faust*"; the fantastic scene in the Witches' Kitchen was written in Rome. It will suffice here to say a few words about the first three dramas. The play of "*Iphigenie*" is founded on the well-known Greek legend, and its form mirrors the beauty and majesty of the best period of Greek plastic art, while the spirit which pervades the whole is neither antique nor Greek; and the plot is unraveled, not by the intervention of a god, but by the purity and sincerity of the heroine. The scene of "*Egmont*" is laid in the Netherlands at the time of Philip II of Spain. The central figures of Egmont, William of Orange, Alva, Margaret of Parma, are in the main true to history, although Egmont is conceived as young and unmarried. Clärchen, the heroine, Egmont's sweetheart, is one of the most beautiful of Goethe's creations. The sentiment of palpable and offensive injustice awakened by the ruin of one of the world's noblemen and of a most lovable

woman is counterbalanced by the poetic justice and ideal beauty of the final scene where Clärchen, who has just died, appears to her lover as the goddess of Liberty, and thus the limited broadens into the universal. In "Torquato Tasso" the scene is at the court of Duke Alphonso II of Ferrara, in the sixteenth century. The hero from whom the play is named is the poet Tasso, author of the epic poem "Jerusalem Delivered." It is a psychological study of a highly sensitive poetical temperament amid the surroundings of court life, based doubtless upon Goethe's own relation to the Duke Karl August and his observations at the court of Weimar. The characters of the two Elinors, the duke's sister and her friend, are clearly and nobly drawn, recalling traits of the Duchess of Weimar and Frau von Stein. Antonio, secretary of state, is less easy to be understood. The conclusion, when Tasso finds comfort in his power of melody and speech which God has given him to tell his woe, and strength in Antonio, who stands firm and calm like the rock to which the shipwrecked mariner clings, may easily be taken as giving Goethe's conception of the fully developed poet: One whose genius is made of supreme worth to humanity by the substantial qualities of wisdom and strength acquired in the discipline of life.

In the spring of 1788, in his thirty-ninth year, Goethe returned to Weimar. From this time his official duties were lightened, but he retained the position of a minister of state. Soon after his return he contracted a so-called conscience marriage with a young girl beneath him in social rank, Christiane Vulpius. The circumstances of their meeting are given in poetic guise in the following lines, which have all the spontaneity of the genuine folk-song:

## FOUND

Once through the forest  
Alone I went;  
To seek for nothing  
My thoughts were bent.

I saw in the shadow  
A flower stand there;  
As stars it glisten'd,  
As eyes 'twas fair.

I sought to pluck it,—  
It gently said:  
“Shall I be gather'd  
Only to fade?”

With all its roots  
I dug it with care,  
And took it home  
To my garden fair.

In silent corner  
Soon it was set;  
There grows it ever,  
There blooms it yet.

This marriage (eighteen years later solemnized by the church) proved a not unhappy one. Christiane was young, cheerful, sensible, and of sufficient intellectuality to enjoy and, to a certain extent, to share her husband's scientific studies. By this union (one child, August, lived to the age of forty years; he was a victim to inebriacy, and on his death at Rome it was found that he had suffered from malformation of the brain) Goethe forfeited much of his social standing for many years; Frau von Stein was highly indignant and all the court ladies sided with her except

the Duchess Amalia whose friendship for Goethe was only interrupted by her death. In the first years of his domestic life Goethe wrote the "Roman Elegies" which, antique in form, celebrate his love for art and Christiane, whom with poetic license he places in the midst of Italian surroundings. To this period in Goethe's life, the last ten years of which received new luster and inspiration by the friendship with Schiller, belongs also "Hermann and Dorothea," which has been selected for interpretation.

#### "HERMANN AND DOROTHEA"

"Hermann and Dorothea" was written in 1796 and 1797. It is composed in hexameters, the verse of the great ancient epics, but its heroes, unlike those of Homer and Vergil, are common people taken from the ordinary walks of life. Nevertheless it is an epos both in style and in treatment.

The poem is divided into nine cantos, named rather arbitrarily from the nine muses. In the following interpretation such passages will be given as best bring out the typical German characters and the philosophy of life underlying the simple narrative.

#### *Canto I. "Fate and Sympathy"*

It is high noon of a late summer day near the close of the eighteenth century. In a small German town on the Rhine the host of the Golden Lion is sitting with his wife on a bench under the archway of their inn. The market-place, on which the house fronts, and the streets are deserted, all the inhabitants having gone down to the highway (about an hour's walk) to see the sad procession of men, women, and children who are passing through the

valley in which the little town lies. These people have left their homes on the west bank of the Rhine to escape the rapacity and unbridled lust of the French army. For back of this peaceful, rural scene looms up the specter of the French Revolution.

While they are conversing, people begin to cross the market-place on their homeward way. Among others, the rich merchant passes driving at full speed up to his prosperous house opposite; with him in his handsome open carriage are his three young daughters. The streets grow lively, and soon the "worthy" housewife recognizes among the pedestrians the pastor, accompanied by their neighbor, the druggist.

"Friendly they both came on, and greeted the good married couple;

Seated themselves on the benches—the wooden ones under the gate-way—

Shook off the dust from their feet, and fanned for a breeze with their 'kerchiefs.'

The druggist, in accordance with the fundamental element of his character, finds fault with his townsmen for their light-mindedness in liking to stare at the misfortune of others without considering that they themselves may soon be overtaken by a similar fate. To this, the "honored, intelligent" pastor replies:

"I am loath to find fault with an innocent instinct,

Which hath at all times been given to man by good Mother Nature;

For what prudence and sense cannot always do, may be often Done by such fortunate impulse as irresistibly guides us,

Were not man strongly induced by curiosity's ardor,

Say, would he ever have learnt how natural things hold together In such lovely connection? For first, he craved what was novel,

Then with unwearied pains continued his search for the useful,  
Longing at last for the good, which exalts him, and gives him  
new value.

Levity in his youth is his joyful companion, to danger  
Ever shutting his eyes, and the traces of pain and of evil  
Blotting with wholesome speed, so soon as their forms have  
past by him."

But the "impatient" hostess interrupts this philosophizing to inquire what they have seen. The druggist recounts the pitiful sights: women and children dragging themselves along laden with baskets of useless things collected in the bewilderment of their hurried flight; the sick and aged lying on beds on top of the swaying wagons; bellowing cattle; overturned carts; and manifold pictures of misery. The humane landlord hopes that his Hermann, whom his wife has sent, may bring them comfort and clothing. Fain to change the subject, he invites his friends into the cool little parlor, whither the good wife shall bring them a wee glass. Over the rummers of Rhine wine their conversation is continued; the host gives expression to his conviction that all things point to peace, and to his wish that, when the joyful day shall come, his Hermann may stand before the altar with his bride, thus making the national festival a glad home anniversary. Yet misgiving mingles with his cheerful anticipations; his son, so active at home, is slow and bashful in society; especially does he avoid the company of young maidens. While he utters these doubts, the noise of clattering hoofs and the roll of the carriage is heard announcing Hermann's return.

*Canto II. "Hermann"*

When the "well-formed" son enters the room, the observant eye of the pastor remarks at once his changed bearing. In a simple, earnest manner Hermann relates what he has done. His mother had rummaged so long in searching and choosing that when he reached the highway, the train of the exiles had already passed out of sight. Quickening his speed towards the village where, as he had heard, they intended to pass the night, he soon overtook an ox team driven by a young woman. On seeing him she came quietly up and courteously asked his aid in behalf of a once rich woman, who, just delivered, was now lying in the wagon with her infant on her arm. He unhesitatingly complied with the request and handed her the bundle of flannel and linen, and finally, following the impulse of his heart, also the food, asking her to distribute the viands as she deemed best. All of this she had promised to do faithfully, and with thanks for his bounty, had gone on her way, while he returned home with his horses. When Hermann had ended his story, the garrulous druggist congratulates himself on being an old bachelor; wife and children would be a sad drawback in these times of confusion. But the young man differs from the neighbor:

"Not at all do I think as thou, and thy speech I must censure.  
Is, then, he the best man who in prosperous days and in adverse  
Thinks of himself alone, and to share his joys and his sorrows  
Knows not, nor feels thereto in his heart the least inclination?  
Sooner now than ever could I determine to marry.  
Many a good maid now stands in need of a man to protect her:  
Many a man needs a wife to cheer him when troubles are  
    threatening."

Smilingly the father commends his son's unusual words of wisdom, and the mother recalls her own love story. She and father were betrothed just twenty years ago—on a Sunday like to-day—at the time of the terrible conflagration, which destroyed almost the whole town, including her father's house and the Golden Lion. She, too, commends Hermann for turning his thoughts toward marriage in such sad times. But the father is eager to qualify somewhat his wife's remarks:

"Laudable is the feeling, and true, too, each word of the story,  
Mother, which thou has told, for so it happened exactly;  
But what is better is better.

"And thus I cherish a hope of thee, my Hermann, that quickly  
Into the house thou wilt bring thy bride with 'fine' marriage-  
portions,  
For a high-spirited man deserves a well-endowed maiden;  
And it gives so much pleasure, when with the dear wife of his  
wishes  
Come in the useful presents, too, in baskets and boxes!

"Yes, my Hermann, thou wouldest to my age grant highest  
enjoyment,  
If to my house ere long thou shouldst bring me a dear little  
daughter  
From the neighborhood here—from the house painted green  
over yonder."

With modest decision the son rejects his father's suggestion. He has no pleasure in the society of his young neighbors, who are always criticizing his clothes, and his manner of wearing his hair. On his last visit they had held him up to ridicule in such a manner that he had sworn never to cross their threshold again, "for vain they all are and loveless." Then the host breaks out in angry

expressions lamenting his son's lack of ambition, and as Hermann moves quietly towards the door, he calls after him:

“Ay, begone! I know thine obstinate temper;  
Go, and attend henceforth to the business, or fear my displeasure.  
But never think thou wilt bring, as daughter-in-law to thy father,  
Into the house where he lives, a boorish girl and a trollop.”

### *Canto III. “The Burghers”*

After the “prudent” son has left the room the father continues the conversation:

“Never, I fear, shall I see fulfill'd my dearest of wishes,  
That my son should be unlike his father, but better.  
What would be the fate of a house or a town, if its inmates  
Did not all take pride in preserving, renewing, improving,  
As we are taught by the age, and by the wisdom of strangers?  
Man is not born to spring out of the ground, just like a mere  
mushroom,  
And to rot away soon in the very place that produc'd him!  
Leaving behind him no trace of what he has done in his life-  
time.”

Here the landlord enlarges upon his own efforts for improvement, when as councilor he superintended the town's works, and expresses his fear that Hermann will never take an interest in public affairs. The “excellent, sensible” mother's defense of her son shows not only a true understanding of his character, but a broad conception of human nature:

“Father, you're always unjust whenever you speak of your son, and  
That is the least likely way to obtain your wishes' fulfilment;  
For we cannot fashion our children after our fancy.  
We must have them and love them, as God has given them to us,  
Bring them up for the best, and let each do as he listeth.  
One has one kind of gift, another possesses another,  
Each one employs them, and each in turn in separate fashion

Good and happy becomes. My Hermann shall not be upbraided,  
For I know that he well deserves the wealth he'll inherit;  
He'll be an excellent landlord, a pattern to burghers and  
peasants,  
And, as I clearly foresee, by no means the last in the council.  
But with your blame and reproaches, you daily dishearten him  
sadly,  
As you have done just now, and make the poor fellow unhappy."

To the landlord's summing up of his ideas in the words of the proverb, "He who moves not forward, goes backward," the druggist circumspectly replies:

"What you say, good neighbor, is certainly true, and my plan is  
Always to think of improvement, provided though new 'tis not  
costly.

I have had plenty of schemes! but then I was terribly frighten'd  
At the expense, especially during a time of such danger.

Lately a fancy possess'd me, the angel Michael, whose figure  
Hangs up over my shop, to treat to a new coat of gilding,  
And the terrible Dragon, who round his feet is entwining;  
But I have left him all brown, as he is; for the cost quite alarm'd  
me."

#### *Canto IV. "The Mother and Son"*

In search of her Hermann, the mother passes through the long-reaching garden, through the vineyard beyond, rising steeply upwards, into the broad spreading grain fields. Here, under a large pear tree which tops the hill and forms the boundary of their property, she finds him looking out over the country towards the distant mountains, and as he turns towards her, she sees that his eyes are wet with tears.

To her questioning, he gives at first evasive answers: It is sympathy for the unfortunate exiles that has stirred up his feelings. How near is the foe! Were it not better straightway to join the soldiers and serve as he best can his country? Then let his father say if he lack honor and ambition. The "good and intelligent" mother is not deceived, she feels that her son's words cover some more personal sentiment and expresses her conviction that the hour of his choice has come, and that she whom his heart has chosen is none other than the poor emigrant maiden.

"Yes, dear mother, you're right," the son with vivacity answer'd—  
"Yes, it is she! And unless this very day I conduct her  
Home as my bride, she will go on her way and escape me forever,  
In the confusion of war, and in moving backwards and forwards.  
Mother, then before my eyes will in vain be unfolded  
All our rich estate, and each year henceforward be fruitful.  
Yes, the familiar house and the garden will be my aversion.

Therefore let me go hence, to where desperation may lead me,  
For my father already has spoken in words of decision,  
And his house no longer is mine, if he shuts out the maiden  
Whom alone I would fain take home as my bride from henceforward."

But the wife understands her husband better than the son his father; hot-headed after dinner, he grows milder when the wine no longer excites his impetuous nature. A hope exists in her bosom, that if the girl is worthy and good, he may be won over. They will venture at once, while his friends are still with him, for most of all the pastor can help them. So they descend in silence, "revolving the mighty proposal."

*Canto V. "The Cosmopolite"*

The landlord, the pastor, and the druggist are still together, discussing the same subject in all its different aspects, when the mother enters holding her son by the hand. Stopping in front of her husband she recalls how often they have looked forward to the glad day when Hermann would choose his bride, concluding:

"And now has arriv'd the right moment!  
Yes, he has felt and has chosen, and like a man has decided.  
That fair maiden it is, the stranger whom he encounter'd.  
Give her him; else he'll remain—he has sworn it—unmarried  
forever."

To the mother's pleadings the son adds his entreaties, and then, as the father remains silent, the "good" pastor takes up the word:

"One single moment's decisive  
Both of the life of a man, and of the whole of his future.  
After lengthen'd reflection, each resolution made by him  
Is but the work of a moment; the prudent alone seize the right  
one.

Nothing more dangerous is, in making a choice, than revolving  
First this point and then that, and so confusing the feelings.  
Pure is Hermann's mind; from his youth I have known him; he  
never,

Even in boyhood, was wont to extend his hand hither and thither.  
What he desir'd was suitable to him; he held to it firmly.

. . . . .

Yes, I can see by his face, already his fate is decided;  
True affection converts the youth to a man in a moment.  
He little changeable is; I fear me, if this you deny him,  
All the fairest years of his life will be chang'd into sorrow."

Then the druggist in his prudent fashion suggests the middle course. He will go to the village and find out, from those who know her, if the maiden be worthy.

Hermann eagerly seizes upon this proposition, desiring only that the pastor accompany the druggist—as for him, he needs no proof, “she is the best of her sisters.” The father reluctantly consents, and with Hermann on the box, the two men are soon speeding on their errand. Under the noble lime trees which overshadow the fountain and the spreading grass plot in front of the village, Hermann reins in his horses. He will remain here while the two others go on by themselves. In order that they may recognize Dorothea he describes her to them in terms which show that his eyes have taken in each minute detail of her appearance:

“First a bodice red her well-arch’d bosom upraises,  
Prettily tied, while black are the stays fitting closely around her,  
Then the seams of the ruff she has carefully plaited and folded,  
Which, with modest grace, her chin so round is encircling.  
Free and joyously rises her head with its elegant oval,  
Strongly round bodkins of silver her back-hair is many times  
twisted;  
Her blue well-plaited gown begins from under her bodice,  
And as she walks envelops her well-turn’d ankles completely.”

After consenting to Hermann’s counsel not to address the maiden nor to disclose the object of their visit, the druggist and the pastor go on to the village, leaving Hermann by the fountain.

#### *Canto VI. “The Age”*

In the village the two friends part company, the druggist going on to spy out the maiden, while the pastor remains in conversation with a venerable-looking man who is a magistrate among the exiles. The reply of this old man to the pastor’s questions concerning the sufferings of

his people is one of the best descriptions of the French Revolution as it appeared to its contemporaries:

"Who can deny that his heart beat wildly and high in his bosom,  
And that with purer pulses his breast more freely was throbbing,  
When the new-born sun first rose in the whole of its glory,  
When we heard of the right of man to have all things in common,  
Heard of noble equality, and of inspiring freedom!  
Each man then hop'd to attain new life for himself, and the fet-  
ters

Which had encircled many a land appear'd to be broken,  
Fetters held by the hands of sloth and selfish indulgence.

Presently after began the war, and the train of arm'd French-  
men

Nearer approach'd; at first they appear'd to bring with them  
friendship,

And they brought it in fact; for all their souls were exalted.  
And the gay trees of liberty ev'rywhere gladly they planted,  
Promising unto each his own, and the government long'd for.  
Greatly at this was youth, and greatly old age was delighted,  
And the joyous dance began round the newly rais'd standards.

Even the strain of the war, with its many demands, seem'd but  
trifling,

For before our eyes the distance by hope was illumin'd,  
Luring our gaze far ahead into paths now open'd before us.  
Oh, how joyful the time, when with his bride the glad bride-  
groom

Whirls in the dance, awaiting the day that will join them for-  
ever!

But more glorious far was the time when the highest of all  
things

Which man's mind can conceive, close by and attainable seemed.

But the heavens soon clouded became. For the sake of the  
mast'ry

Strove a contemptible crew, unfit to accomplish good actions.

Then they murder'd each other, and took to oppressing their  
new-found  
Neighbors and brothers, and sent on missions whole herds of  
self-seekers;

Soon into weapons were turn'd the implements peaceful of  
tillage,

And with dripping blood the scythe and the pitchfork were  
cover'd.

Every foeman without distinction was ruthlessly slaughter'd,  
Fury was ev'rywhere raging, and artful, cowardly weakness.

May I never again see men in such wretched confusion!

Even the raging wild beast is a better object to gaze on.

Ne'er let them speak of freedom, as if themselves they could  
govern.

All the evil which Law has driven far back in the corner  
Seems to escape as soon as the fetters which bound it, are  
loosen'd."

The pastor, ever inclined to look for the good in seeming evil, suggests that he must also have seen how "many an excellent thing," otherwise "deeply hidden in the heart," was pressed to the surface by danger, and the magistrate recalls the heroic deed of a young maiden who defended herself and a roomful of girls from the assaults of a band of vagabond scoundrels. At this point the druggist returns, having discovered a maiden answering Hermann's description. Later they learn from the magistrate that this girl is the heroine of the story; and that she is as good as she is strong; having cared for an aged relative to the day of his death and courageously borne the loss of her lover who died in Paris for the cause of freedom. Their mission being accomplished, they hasten to return to Hermann, whom they find a prey to doubts, which in the meantime have taken possession of his soul.

Can he hope to win so good and beautiful a maiden? Even the glad news which they bring fails to reassure him. He asks them to drive home, while he goes alone to learn his fate from her own mouth. That decided, he will return by the nearer way, the foot-path over the hill by the pear tree, and down through the vineyard and garden.

*Canto VII. "Dorothea"*

The canto opens with a striking simile: As one who after having fixed his gaze on the setting sun sees its hovering image wherever he turns, so before Hermann's eyes Dorothea's fair form moves along the path through the grain fields. Slowly arousing himself from his dream, he sees the "stately figure" of the "noble maiden" approach, now no phantom of the imagination. From the pitchers which she carries he knows that she has come to draw water. After mutual greetings they go together to the spring. The scene at the fountain is of idyllic beauty:

"Both of them sat themselves down on the low wall  
Round the spring. She bent herself over, to draw out the water,  
He the other pitcher took up, and bent himself over,  
And in the blue of the heavens they saw their figures reflected,  
Waving and nodding, and in the mirror their greetings exchang-ing.

Now let me drink, exclaim'd the youth in accents of gladness,  
And she gave him the pitcher. They then, like old friends, sat  
together,

Leaning against the vessels, when she address'd him as follows:  
'Say, why find I you here without your carriage and horses,  
Far from the place where first I saw you? Pray, how came you  
hither?"'

Hermann tells her at first the plain truth:

"Let me speak, my child, and let me answer your questions,  
'Tis for your sake alone I have come—why seek to conceal it?"

As he proceeds, his words become purposely ambiguous.  
As servants greatly worry their mistress, his mother, so he  
declares, has long been wanting a girl in the household,

"Who, not only with hand, but also with heart might assist her,  
In the place of the daughter she lost, alas prematurely."

Dorothea understands from his stammering speech that he  
would fain hire her as a maid to look after the house; and  
comes to his aid by affirming her readiness to go with  
him, as soon as she has taken the water back to her  
friends and received their blessing.

"Let us now return," she continu'd; "the custom is always  
To admonish the maidens who tarry too long at the fountain,  
Yet how delightful it is by the fast-flowing water to chatter!"  
Then they both arose, and once more directed their glances  
Into the fountain, and then a blissful longing came o'er them.  
So from the ground by the handle she silently lifted the pitchers,  
Mounted the steps of the well, and Hermann follow'd the lov'd  
one.

One of the pitchers he ask'd her to give him, thus sharing the  
burden.

"Leave it," she said, "the weight feels less when thus they are  
balanc'd;

And the master I've soon to obey should not be my servant."

In the village Hermann sees the sick woman surrounded  
by her refound family. All warmly bless and congratulate  
him; as long as the maiden is in his house he will not  
miss a sister nor his parents a daughter. Finally, with  
the admonition that the day is declining and the village  
distant, Hermann tears her away from the embraces of  
the weeping children; and, followed by signaling 'ker-  
chiefs, they start on their way.

*Canto VIII. "Hermann and Dorothea"*

Together they go towards the setting sun, which veiled in clouds, ever and anon beams forth lurid glances foreboding the gathering storm. On their way the maiden—her name Dorothea is used only twice in the whole poem—desires Hermann to tell her about his father and mother that she may know how to conduct herself. While Hermann is responding they come to the pear tree. The last pale gleam of sunset has vanished, and the full moon is shining down upon the grain fields, the vineyard, the garden, and the houses below. With hesitation she now inquires on what terms she shall be with himself, the only son, and hereafter her master. As they sit down under the pear tree to rest, Hermann, seizing the maiden's hand, replies, "Let your heart give the answer, and always obey what it tells you!" He says no more for he feels the ring on her finger. But the maiden, unconscious of the struggle in her companion's soul, resumes the discourse:

"How delightful  
Is the light of the moon! The clearness of day it resembles.  
Yonder I see in the town the houses and court-yards quite plainly,  
In the gable a window; methinks all the panes I can reckon."

Speaking with an effort, the youth replies that the window pointed out belongs to his room in the attic of their house, and that this room will probably soon be hers, as great changes are being made. Finally pointing to their far-stretching fields, ripe for the harvest, and to the vineyard and garden across which they have to descend, he urges her on, for nearer and nearer rolls the threatening storm.

"Lightning first, and then eclipsing the beautiful full moon."  
In the sudden darkness the maiden slips on the rough

steps which lead down through the foliage of the vines, and holding out his arm to prevent her fall, Hermann supports the form of his loved one.

"Breast was press'd against breast, and cheek against cheek,  
and so stood he  
Fix'd like a marble statue, restrain'd by a firm resolution;  
He embraced her no closer, though all her weight he supported;  
So he felt his noble burden, the warmth of her bosom  
And her balmy breath against his warm lips exhaling,  
Bearing with manly feeling the woman's heroical greatness."

Dorothea, concealing her pain, tactfully relieves the situation by a jest, pronouncing it a bad omen if the foot gives way on entering a house, and begging him to tarry a little lest his parents chide him for bringing home a limping servant.

#### *Canto IX. "Prospect"*

This last canto—a departure from the common style of calling upon divine aid at the beginning of the first song of an epic poem—opens by invoking the Muses to drive away the clouds which obscure the happiness of the loving couple.

As Hermann conducts Dorothea into the room where his father and mother and the two friends are anxiously awaiting his return, his mind is filled with uncertainty—the situation is indeed embarrassing; his parents await a prospective daughter-in-law; but Dorothea comes as a kind of upper servant, expecting a friendly but not an affectionate greeting. She is deeply wounded by the first words of the impulsive landlord commending his son's good taste. Blushing and distressed in spirit, she replies that she was not prepared for a greeting which well-nigh renders it impossible for her to remain in the house.

Hermann in the meantime has made a clean breast to the pastor, imploring his aid in unraveling the knot. But the wise man is moved to try the maiden still farther. Feigning to chide her hasty reply, he draws forth its true cause. The father's jest has wounded her, not because she is "proud and touchy," but because of a feeling which has arisen in her heart for the youth who twice that day had so unexpectedly come to her assistance. She concludes this confession of her love:

"Happily I am warned in time, and out of my bosom  
Has my secret escaped while curable still is the evil."

As she moves towards the door, ready to leave, the good mother puts both her arms around her, and cries in amazement:

"Say, what signifies this? These fruitless tears what denote they?  
No, I'll not leave you alone! You're surely my dear son's  
betrothed!"

But the father, to whom above all else women's tears are detestable, peevishly remarks that they may fix it up among themselves; for his part—he is going to bed. At this point Hermann steps forth, taking the blame for the confusion upon himself. With gentle words he addresses Dorothea:

"Do not repent of your tears, nor yet of your passing affliction;  
For they perfect my happiness; yours too, I fain would consider.

I came not to the fountain, to hire so noble a maiden  
As a servant, I came to seek to win your affections.  
But, alas! My timid gaze had not strength to discover  
Your heart's leanings; it saw in your eye but a friendly expres-  
sion

When you greeted it out of the fountain's bright mirror.

Merely to bring you home made half of my happiness certain;  
But you now make it complete! May every blessing be yours,  
then!"

From the embrace of her lover, Dorothea turns to the only half-peased father. Gracefully bending over his hand, she begs him to forgive her former tears of sorrow and these of joy. Both parents straightway embrace her as their daughter, and the pastor, drawing their marriage rings from their fingers, betroths the "children."

As he does this, the pastor observes the other ring on Dorothea's finger, and jestingly remarks:

"What! You are twice engaging yourself! I hope that the first  
one  
May not appear at the altar unkindly forbidding the banns  
there!"

Both the astonishment and the jesting remark are difficult to explain, as the magistrate, in canto six, had acquainted the pastor with the fact of the terrible death of Dorothea's lover. Presumably this passage—the omission of which would do away with the difficulty—had slipped Goethe's mind. We certainly should be loath to dispense with Dorothea's reply.

In the reminiscences of her former betrothed, called forth by the pastor's words, and in Hermann's reply, two noble types of men are placed in striking juxtaposition. Dorothea in recalling the brave youth who on departing for Paris, where he found prison and death, had given her the ring cites his parting words:

"Farewell, said he, I go; for all things on earth are in motion  
At this moment, and all things appear in a state of disunion.

You of my heart have possession, and if we shall ever hereafter

Meet again over the wreck of the world it will be as new creatures

All remodel'd and free and independent of fortune;  
For what fetters can bind down those who survive such a period!  
But if we are destined not to escape from these dangers  
If we are never again to embrace each other with rapture,  
Oh, then fondly keep in your thoughts my hovering image  
That you may be prepar'd with like courage for good and mis-  
fortune

If a new home or a new alliance should chance to allure you,  
Then enjoy with thanks whatever your destiny offers,  
Purely loving the loving, and grateful to him who thus loves you.

Deem each day as sacred; but value not life any higher  
Than any other possession, for all possessions are fleeting."

So speaking she places the new ring by the old; and Hermann answers in words which still more closely connect their simple love story with the history of their age:

"All the firmer amidst the universal disruption  
Be, Dorothea, our union; we'll shew ourselves bold and en-  
during,

Firmly hold our own and firmly retain our possessions.  
For the man who in wav'ring times is inclin'd to be wav'ring  
Only increases the evil, and spreads it wider and wider;  
But the man of firm decision the universe fashions.  
'Tis not becoming the Germans to further this fearful commotion,  
And in addition to waver uncertainly hither and thither.  
This is our own, we ought to say, and so to maintain it!  
For the world will ever applaud those resolute nations  
Who for God and the Law, their wives, and parents, and chil-  
dren

Struggle, and fall when contending against the foeman toge:her.  
You are mine; and now what is mine is mine more than ever.  
Not with anxiety will I preserve it or timidly use it,  
But with courage and strength. And if the enemy threaten,  
Now or hereafter, I'll hold myself ready and reach down my  
weapon.

If I know that the house and my parents by you are protected,  
I shall expose my breast to the enemy, void of all terror;  
And if all others thought thus, then might against might should  
be measur'd  
And in the early prospect of peace we should all be rejoicing."

"Hermann and Dorothea" is an idyllic picture of a genuine German family life. Its artistic descriptions have made it a favorite study for painters. What lifts the poem into the rank of a national epic is the great historical background of the French Revolution. About its place in Goethe's life and German literature a few remarks will be made in the first part of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

GOETHE: "FAUST," THE DRAMA OF HUMANITY

1805-1832

I should only confuse the reader by attempting to set forth all the forms of intellectual, ethical, or theological significance which have been attached to the characters of "Faust." The intention of the work, reduced to its simplest element, is easily grasped; but if every true poet builds larger than he knows, this drama, completed by the slow accretion of sixty years of thought, may be assumed to have a vaster background of design, change, and reference than almost anything else in literature.—*Bayard Taylor.*

On Goethe's return from Italy (June, 1788) he found a rising young author, Friedrich Schiller, living in Weimar. Schiller was but twenty-eight at this time, and chiefly known by his "The Robbers" and "Don Carlos," dramas reflecting the ebullition of the Storm and Stress period.

In reality their author had already outgrown his works. In his views of literary art he stood much nearer his great contemporary than did any other writer of the day. This fact Goethe could not know, neither did their first casual meetings reveal it. The next year Schiller, who was poor and wished to marry, accepted an appointment to the chair of history in the University of Jena.

Goethe was frequently absent from Weimar, having accompanied the duke on several campaigns, in which he acquired that intimate acquaintance with the French Revolution reflected in his "Hermann and Dorothea."

It was Schiller who took the first step towards a nearer acquaintance. In 1794, about to issue a new journal, *The Hours* (*Die Horen*), he wrote to Goethe asking his collaboration, which Goethe cordially promised. Soon afterwards Goethe invited Schiller to visit him in order to talk over plans of work. This invitation Schiller accepted very readily as in the meantime they had met and come to a better understanding of each other. It was during this visit that the basis of the friendship was laid which endured until Schiller's death, in 1805. For nearly eleven years these two great men worked side by side, sharing their plans, discussing their literary theories, receiving mutual inspiration, and now side by side they rest in the grand ducal vault at Weimar. One of the most immediate results of this friendship was that reawakening of Goethe's poetic faculties, which he himself calls his "new spring." Since the completion of "Tasso" and the "Roman Elegies" Goethe had devoted himself to scientific studies. With enthusiasm he now resumed work along purely literary lines. The "Roman Elegies" were published in *Die Horen*. He wrote conjointly with his friend the "Xenien" (presents given by the Greek to the parting guest), an ironical title for epigrammatic distichs, which cut right and left among the critics of the day; and in 1797, in friendly rivalry, they composed many ballads which appeared in Schiller's "Almanach of the Muses." This year is known in German literature as the Ballad Year. Encouraged by Schiller's interest, he completed his "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" and resumed work upon his "Faust." His most important literary contribution is the epic poem "Hermann and Dorothea," an analysis of which is given in the preceding chapter.

The story upon which it is based, Goethe found in a pamphlet (published in 1732) on the banishment of the Salzburg Protestants. Its form was suggested by "Luise," an idyllic poem by Voss, the unsurpassed translator of Homer. Retaining the main incidents of the story found in the Salzburg pamphlet, Goethe substituted a political for the religious motivation of banishment, and brought the time of the action, which in his poem covers only six to eight hours, forward to the date of writing; that is, approximately to August 7, 1796. A comparison of the unadorned old narrative of a few hundred words, written in prose, with Goethe's masterly production in nine classic cantos, is another proof of the usurious interest which—as Lowell has aptly said—genius always pays in borrowing. The author in his old age took pleasure in reading it, and the pastor's words on death, taken from Canto IX, were inscribed on the curtain behind which Goethe's mortal remains lay in state.

"The picture of death ever busy,  
Strikes not the wise with fear, nor is viewed as an end by the pious;  
Back into life it urges the one, for its dealings instructed,  
And for the other in sorrow it strengthens the hope of the future.  
Death becomes life to both."

On May 9, 1805, Goethe received a heavy blow in the death of Schiller, to whom years afterwards, in loving remembrance, he paid this exquisite tribute: "He stood beside me like my youth, making actual existence a dream to me, weaving the golden vapors of the dawn about the common realities of life. In the fire of his loving soul, even the plain, every-day objects of life became, to my astonishment, exalted." (Quoted by Boyesen from Julian Schmidt's "Geschichte der deutschen Literatur," Vol.

II, p. 420.) He survived his friend over a quarter of a century. This final period was filled with varied and useful activity; besides his works along critical and scientific lines he published, "Elective Affinities" (1809), "Fact and Fiction" (1811; 1812; 1814; 1831), "The Italian Journey" (1816; 1817; 1829), the materials of which are the letters written from Italy to friends in Weimar, among them Herder and Frau von Stein.

An allusion has already been made to the poet's great susceptibility to the influence of women. The years of his decline were cheered by several new and intimate friendships: Bettina Brentano, afterwards Von Arnim and known by her "Correspondence with a Child"; Wilhelmine Herzlieb, traits of whose character are reflected in Ottilie in the "Elective Affinities"; Marianne Willemer, the Suleika of one of the most beautiful productions of this period; and Ulrica von Levezow, the lovely girl of nineteen who inspired in the breast of the poet of seventy-five a warmer feeling, to which we owe the "Trilogy of Passion." The final victory of reason, aided by the power of music, is thus expressed in the closing lines of "Atonement," the third song of the trilogy:

"And so the lighten'd heart soon learns to see  
That it still lives, and beats, and ought to beat,  
Off'ring itself with joy and willingly,  
In grateful payment for a gift so sweet.  
And then was felt—oh, may it constant prove!—  
The twofold bliss of music and of love."

To live to old age means to outlive many sources of joy. Even Goethe, whom old age spared infirmity, could not escape this common fate. His wife, to whom he was

legally united in 1806, died ten years later. The duke, now grand-duke, lived three years after celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his accession—he died in 1828, and the death of Frau von Stein, with whom Goethe had long been reconciled, occurred in 1827. But his life was cheered by his daughter-in-law, Ottilie, by his two grandsons, and by abundant public recognition both at home and abroad. A few months after the grand-duke's semi-centenary, the fiftieth anniversary of Goethe's arrival in Weimar was also celebrated. He had long been von Goethe (the "von" before the name indicating nobility without an estate in connection with the title), and since 1815, First Minister of State. The closing work of his life was the completion of his masterpiece begun over sixty years before, the work which binds together and crowns his long and eventful life. It was completed a few months before his death, which occurred March 22, 1832. In the eighty-third year of his age, while sitting in his arm-chair, after an illness of a few days, he quietly passed away. His mind was unimpaired to the last, and his body, even after the vital spark had long departed, showed, as his friend and private secretary, Eckermann, affirms, none of the blemishes of death.

#### "FAUST"

In the study of Goethe's "Faust," as in that of all great masterpieces, the find is proportionate to the student's power of perception. The youth of average intellectuality, education, and experience sees in the work a tragic love story. The person of riper years and intelligence, without necessarily being a trained thinker, sees much more. Before him passes the whole panorama of

life. He sees a great soul struggling against human limitations in its insatiable search for knowledge, and deliberately setting free the evil inherent in its nature, but hitherto kept in bounds. Accompanying this soul in its downward path (in which that special sin, so universally comprehensible, involving in its dire consequences the temporal ruin of a loving young girl, becomes but a step—although really a seven league stride) he witnesses its ultimate victory over evil through the commanding power of love.

The following brief interpretation of Goethe's "Faust" does not purport to enter into any profound metaphysical analysis of the drama, nor to solve obscure riddles, but to bring out the conception just given. As far as space will allow, the words of the author will be used.

The Faust story is founded on the old folk-legend of Dr. Faustus, who sold his soul to the Evil One. This mediæval legend, with which Goethe first became acquainted through the puppet plays given at the yearly fairs, always had a great fascination for him; his literary source was the old Faust book of the sixteenth century. A comparison of this publication with Goethe's poem is most interesting, for it shows from what crude material Goethe evolved his typical Faust, and his entirely modern Mephistopheles as the spirit which denies, and the evil which must exist in order that character may be developed through struggle. The chronology of Goethe's "Faust" covers the whole period of his literary activity. As has been mentioned, the first inception dates from Goethe's student days in Strassburg, where the old legend held him with almost the force of an obsession. When he went to Weimar, he carried with him in manuscript the greater portion of what is now Part First. This we know from

the Göchhausen Manuscript (a manuscript copied from the original by Luise von Göchhausen, a maid of honor at the Weimar court; it was found in 1887). This early version consists of some twenty scenes, written in prose and verse. It contains Faust's first soliloquy, the vision of the macrocosm, the dialogue with the Earth-Spirit, the dialogue with Wagner, the dialogue between Mephistopheles and student, the scene in Auerbach's cellar, and nearly all of the Gretchen tragedy. Besides the scenes contained in this copy, Goethe doubtless retained other matter not yet fully elaborated, for portions of Part First not found in this manuscript, show unmistakable evidence of Goethe's early period. The first printed "Faust" is known as "The Fragment." A comparison of the Fragment with the Göchhausen Manuscript shows much recasting. Among other changes the Valentine scene, and the three last scenes, the "Dismal Day" scene, the short night scene at the cross-roads, and the prison scene are omitted. The drama ends with Gretchen's swoon in the cathedral. The completed First Part was printed three years after the death of Schiller, 1808. Part Second, evidently contemplated from the time of the resumption of the Faust subject in 1797, was completed a few months before his own death, in 1832. The "Dedication" acquires an added significance when we recall that it was written in 1797 (the year in which "Hermann and Dorothea" was finished), a quarter of a century after the "Faust" of the Göchhausen Manuscript; the "Faust" which Goethe read before the Duchess Amalia and the Weimar circle. Many of those who had listened to these early readings were dead, or separated by distance or estrangement, when the mature man of forty-eight wrote:

"They hear no longer these succeeding measures,  
 The souls to whom my earliest songs I sang;  
 Dispersed the friendly troop, with all its pleasures,  
 And still, alas! the echoes first that rang!  
 I bring the unknown multitude my treasures,  
 Their very plaudits give my heart a pang,  
 And those beside, whose joy my song so flattered,  
 If still they live, wide through the world are scattered.  
 And grasps me now a long-unwonted yearning  
 For that serene and solemn Spirit-Land:  
 My song, to faint Æolian murmurs turning,  
 Sways like a harp-string by the breezes fanned.  
 I thrill and tremble; tear on tear is burning,  
 And the stern heart is tenderly unmanned.  
 What I possess, I see far distant lying,  
 And what I lost, grows real and undying."

The Prelude on the Stage which follows, shows why the poet used the dramatic form as the best and most natural embodiment of the Faust legend. A brief reference to the succeeding Prologue in Heaven (probably also written in 1797) is necessary for the understanding of the work. Its dramatic setting was suggested by the interview of Satan with the Lord, found in the first and second chapters of the book of Job. Mephistopheles is represented as appearing before the Lord, not to praise his works, as the angels do, but to deride the whimsicality of all created things, especially of man, about whom he says:

"The little god o' the world sticks to the same old way,  
 And is as whimsical as on Creation's day.  
 Life somewhat better might content him  
 But for the gleam of heavenly light which Thou hast lent him;  
 He calls it Reason—thence his power's increased,  
 To be far beastlier than any beast.  
 Saving Thy Gracious Presence, he to me  
 A long-legged grasshopper appears to be,

That springing flies, and flying springs,  
 And in the grass the same old ditty sings.  
 Would he still lay among the grass he grows in!  
 Each bit of dung he seeks to stick his nose in."

To the Lord's inquiry, whether he know his servant Faust, Mephistopheles replies:

"Forsooth! He serves you after strange devices:  
 No earthly meat or drink the fool suffices  
 His spirit's ferment far aspireth;  
 Half conscious of his frenzied, crazed unrest,  
 The fairest stars from Heaven he requireth,  
 From earth the highest raptures and the best,  
 And all the Near and Far that he desireth  
 Fails to subdue the tumult of his breast."

But the Lord rejoins:

"Though still confused his service unto Me,  
 I soon shall lead him to a clearer morning.  
 Sees not the gardener, even while buds his tree,  
 Both flower and fruit the future years adorning?"

Mephistopheles's offer of a wager that he will be able to gain Faust, provided he have leave to try, is readily accepted:

"As long as he on earth shall live,  
 So long I make no prohibition.  
 While man's desires and aspirations stir,  
 He cannot choose but err."

And when Mephistopheles thanks him sarcastically for this permission, the Lord reemphasizes his assent, foretelling the result:

"Enough! What thou hast asked is granted.  
 Turn off this spirit from his fountain-head;  
 To trap him let thy snares be planted,  
 And him, with thee, be downward led;  
 Then stand abashed when thou art forced to say,  
 A good man, through obscurest aspiration,  
 Has still an instinct of the one true way."

The closing speech of the Lord contains Goethe's conception of Mephistopheles:

"Man's active nature, flagging, seeks too soon the level;  
Unqualified repose he learns to crave;  
Whence, willingly, the comrade him I gave,  
Who works, excites, and must create, as Devil."

When the drama opens, Faust is seated at his desk in a lofty-arched, narrow Gothic chamber, whose walls are hidden by shelves of books, scrolls, flasks, chemical and astrological instruments. Beyond the statement in the soliloquy, that he has taught ten years, his age is not indicated, but the general impression given by these early scenes would place him about thirty. His mood accords with Mephistopheles's description in the Prologue. He has studied philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine, and even theology, but is "no wiser than before":

"I'm Magister—yea, Doctor—hight,  
And straight or cross-wise, wrong or right,  
These ten years long, with many woes,  
I've led my scholars by the nose—  
And see that nothing can be known!  
That knowledge cuts me to the bone."

In despair he resorts to magic in order to force perchance nature to yield up some of her secrets, and thus to be spared the bitter task of saying things he does not know. He opens "The Book of Mystery," and finally summons the Earth-Spirit, who appears in a ruddy flame. Faust, at first unable to endure the apparition, averts his head, but soon regaining his self-control, he exclaims:

"Thee, form of flame, shall I then fear?  
Yes, I am Faust: I am thy peer!"

To which the Spirit replies:

"In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,  
A fluctuant wave,  
A shuttle free,  
Birth and the Grave,  
An eternal sea,  
A weaving, flowing  
Life, all-glowing,  
Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares  
The garment of Life which the Deity wears!"

Having thus introduced himself as the creative energy, which has produced and is producing the visible universe, the garment of Deity, the Earth-Spirit answers Faust's passionate greeting:

"Thou busy Spirit, how near I feel to thee!"

with the significant refusal:

"Thou'rt like the Spirit which thou comprehendest,  
Not me!"

and disappears. Faust's outburst of despair is checked by the visit of the learned Wagner, his *famulus* or student assistant, here represented as a dry pedant, such as were especially repugnant to Goethe in his student days. The self-satisfied, narrow scholar, who glories in the results of past research and prides himself on his own attainments, has no message for the dissatisfied, broad-spirited Faust. He dismisses Wagner, and left alone, determines to end his life. Just as he is about to raise the goblet of poison to his lips a chime of bells and the notes of the Easter choral arrest his attention:

"Christ is arisen!  
Joy to the Mortal One,  
Whom the unmerited,  
Clinging, inherited  
Needs did imprison."

Childhood memories, recalled by these "hymns of Heaven," hold him back from committing the irreparable deed; and the scene closes with the triumphant final stanza—the "Chorus of Angels":

"Christ is arisen,  
Out of Corruption's womb:  
Burst ye the prison,  
Break from your gloom!  
Praising and pleading him,  
Lovingly needing him,  
Brotherly feeding him,  
Preaching and speeding him,  
Blessing, succeeding him,  
Thus is the Master near—  
Thus is he here!"

These words may be regarded as prophetic of the final solution of the problem of life which now baffles Faust.

The exceeding wonderfully graphic scene before the city gates on Easter is an ever-changing picture of life set in the mediæval frame of the old legend. Here appears the black poodle, which following Faust home in the ensuing study scene, gnarls and howls his displeasure as Faust translates the first chapter of John, and finally at Faust's exorcism steps forth in the guise of a traveling scholar. Mephistopheles (for such he is) asked by Faust, "What is thy name?" introduces himself as

"Part of that Power, not understood,  
Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good."

And upon Faust's further question,

"What hidden sense in this enigma lies?"

gives the following explanation:

"I am the Spirit that Denies  
 And justly so: for all things, from the Void  
 Called forth, deserve to be destroyed:  
 'Twere better, then, were naught created.  
 Thus, all which you as sin have rated—  
 Destruction, aught with evil blent,  
 This is my proper element.

. . . . .

Part of the Part am I, once all, in primal Night—  
 Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light,  
 The haughty Light, which now disputes the space,  
 And claims of Mother Night her ancient place."

Faust, understanding quite well with whom he has to do, suggests a compact with the gentleman, and Mephistopheles, promising to talk the matter over soon with him, asks leave to retire. The scene in which the compact is duly made and signed is again in Faust's chamber. In answer to Mephistopheles's knock, Faust must thrice bid him enter. Although Mephistopheles is thus present by Faust's own invitation, and the pact is his own proposition, Faust's words show conclusively that he has little faith in Mephistopheles's power to give him what he now seeks, contentment and happiness:

"Canst thou, poor Devil, give me whatsoever?  
 When was a human soul, in its supreme endeavor,  
 E'er understood by such as thou?"

Mephistopheles, as in the Prologue, is sure of himself and ready to promise whatsoever any man may desire. The terms of the contract are clearly and unmistakably stated:

*Faust.* When on an idler's bed I stretch myself in quiet,  
 There let, at once, my record end!  
 Canst thou with lying flattery rule me,  
 Until, self-pleased, myself I see—

Canst thou with rich enjoyment fool me,  
Let that day be the last for me!  
The bet I offer.

*Mephistopheles.* Done!

*Faust.* And heartily!

When thus I hail the moment flying:  
“Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!”  
Then bind me in thy bonds undying,  
My final ruin then declare!  
Then let the death-bell chime the token,  
Then art thou from thy service free!  
The clock may stop, the hand be broken,  
Then time be finished unto me!

By this pact, as will be seen when carefully studied, Faust takes little risk, and Mephistopheles in accepting shows something of the stupidity which old legends almost invariably attribute to the devil.

The conversation is interrupted by a student who, newly matriculated, “comes to greet and know the man of fame.” Mephistopheles in Faust’s cap and mantle impersonates the learned professor. In the ensuing dialogue Goethe gives the ideas of university studies which he, and many another, entertained as a student.

The rollicking scene where Mephistopheles draws wine from holes bored in the table, is laid in Auerbach’s cellar in Leipzig. This famous wine-cellar was early connected with the old Faust legend. The house was rebuilt in 1520, but the cellars in the vaults remained from the earlier building. Two large paintings of the sixteenth century still adorn the vaults, one representing Faust in rough cap and mantle, seated at the table with the students, a goblet in his hand, at his side a black dog watching him, the other showing him astride of a wine-

cask, being whisked by the agency of the demon through the open door.

In the witches' kitchen, filled with fantastic figures of northern demonology (though the scene was written in Italy), after much hocus-pocus Faust drinks the magic potion, which shall remove full "thirty years from his existence," a reckoning which would make Faust fifty at least, although, as has been intimated, in the earlier scenes Goethe conceived him as much younger. In Scene VII the Gretchen episode begins. Of this episode, the best known—in fact, the whole of the drama to many readers—such parts will be dwelt upon as are necessary for coherence and for placing before us this most beloved of Goethe's characters. The elusive charm which hangs about hapless Margaret is incapable of being analyzed. Clearly drawn, she stands out in tender, living characters, a never-fading picture.

The first meeting occurs as Margaret is leaving the cathedral after confession. Faust, addressing her as "fair lady," offers his escort. Margaret's reply shows that she is a simple girl of the people, used to taking care of herself:

"I'm neither lady, neither fair,  
And home I can go without your care."

Margaret is young, beautiful and innocent. The Margaret episode is Goethe's alone; she does not appear in the legend. The genius of her creator places before us her whole home life in a few simple words:

*Margaret.* We have no maid: I do the knitting, sewing,  
sweeping,  
The cooking, early work and late, in fact;  
And mother, in her notions of housekeeping,  
Is so exact!

Not that she needs so much to keep expenses down,  
We, more than others, might take comfort rather;  
A nice estate was left us by my father,  
A house, a little garden near the town.  
But now my days have less of noise and hurry;  
My brother is a soldier,  
My little sister dead.  
True, with the child a troubled life I led,  
Yet I would take again, and willing, all the worry,  
So very dear was she.

Her standing among her companions is given in the monologue of her soldier brother Valentine, just before the duel in which he is slain:

“When I have sat at some carouse,  
Where each to each his brag allows,  
And many a comrade praised to me  
His pink of girls right lustily,  
With brimming glass that spilled the toast,  
And elbows planted as in boast,  
I sat in unconcerned repose,  
And heard the swagger as it rose.  
And stroking then my beard, I’d say,  
Smiling, the bumper in my hand:  
‘Each well enough in her own way,  
But is there one in all the land  
Like sister Margaret, good as gold—  
One that to her can a candle hold?’  
Cling! clang! ‘Here’s to her!’ went around  
The board: ‘He speaks the truth!’ cried some;  
‘In her the flower o’ the sex is found!’  
And all the swaggerers were dumb.”

But the Margaret who wins our hearts is the girl who wonders, while she plaits and binds her hair, “Who was that gentleman to-day?” and later in her preparations for rest sings an old folk-song of love constant unto death, beginning,

"There was a King in Thule,  
 Was faithful till the grave—  
 To whom his mistress, dying,  
 A golden goblet gave;"

the Margaret who decks herself with genuine girlish delight in the jewels found in the casket, which Mephistopheles has put in her wardrobe and finds that "One has at once another air"; the Margaret who walks with Faust in Martha's garden and plucks the leaves from the star-flower to see if he love her; the Margaret of the spinning-wheel who sings,

"My peace is gone,"  
 My heart is sore:  
 I never shall find it,  
 Ah, nevermore!"

the Margaret who catechizes her lover and hates his companion, whose presence she flees "like something ill," and upon whose forehead it is written "that love to him is a thing abhorred"; the ill-fated, forlorn Margaret of the road-side shrine who as she places fresh flowers before the Mater Dolorosa, prays:

"Incline, O Maiden,  
 Thou sorrow-laden,  
 Thy gracious countenance upon my pain!  
  
 The sword Thy heart in,  
 With anguish smarting,  
 Thou lookest up to where Thy Son is slain!  
  
 Thou seest the Father;  
 Thy sad sighs gather,  
 And bear aloft Thy sorrow and His pain!  
  
 Ah, past guessing,  
 Beyond expressing,

The pangs that wring my flesh and bone!  
 Why this anxious heart so burneth,  
 Why it trembleth, why it yearneth,  
 Knowest thou, and thou alone!

Where'er I go, what sorrow,  
 What woe, what woe and sorrow  
 Within my bosom aches!  
 Alone, and ah! unsleeping,  
 I'm weeping, weeping, weeping,  
 The heart within me breaks.

The pots before my window,  
 Alas, my tears did wet!  
 As in the early morning  
 For thee these flowers I set.

Within my lonely chamber  
 The morning sun shone red:  
 I sat in utter sorrow,  
 Already on my bed.

Help! rescue me from death and stain!  
 O Maiden!  
 Thou sorrow-laden,  
 Incline Thy countenance upon my pain!"

The duel scene, in which Valentine is killed by Faust, affords Mephistopheles a pretext for removing Faust during the months of Margaret's extremity.

The Cathedral scene (which in the Göchhausen Manuscript is headed "Obsequies of Margaret's mother") was the end of the "Fragment." In the opening lines whispered into poor Margaret's ears, by the Evil Spirit, we learn all her guilt:

"How otherwise was it, Margaret,  
 When thou, still innocent,  
 Here to the altar cam'st,  
 And from the worn and fingered book  
 Thy prayers did prattle,

Half sport of childhood,  
 Half God within thee!  
 Margaret!  
 Where tends thy thought?  
 Within thy bosom  
 What hidden crime?  
 Pray'st thou for mercy on thy mother's soul,  
 That fell asleep to long, long torment, and through thee?  
 Upon thy threshold whose the blood?  
 And stirreth not and quickens  
 Something beneath thy heart,  
 Thy life disquieting  
 With most foreboding presence?"

And in her exclamation:

"Woe! woe!  
 Would I were free from the thoughts  
 That cross me, drawing hither and thither,  
 Despite me!"

we see the sad condition of mind presaging insanity. As the grand old Latin hymn of the Day of Judgment (*Dies Iræ*) resounds through the arches of the cathedral, poor Margaret feels as if the organ would take away her breath, as if the massy pillars would imprison and the vaulted arches crush her, while with the anthem the words of the Evil Spirit mingle:

"Hide thyself! Sin and Shame  
 Stay never hidden.  
 Air? Light?  
 Woe to thee!  
 They turn their faces,  
 The glorified, from thee:  
 The pure, their hands to offer,  
 Shuddering, refuse thee!  
 Woe!"

Margaret falls in a swoon.

The following scene is on the Brocken, the highest peak of the Hartz Mountains. It is the night of the first of May—Walpurgis night when all the fantastic creations of northern demonology hold high carnival, and the mountain is “magic mad.”

Even here, despite his sins, Faust remains a poet. The spring brings its message of life to him:

“O'er the stones, the grasses, flowing  
Stream and streamlet seek the hollow.  
Hear I noises? songs that follow?  
Hear I tender love petitions?  
Voices of those heavenly visions?  
Sounds of hope, of love undying!  
And the echoes, like traditions  
Of old days, come faint and hollow.”

Later, while dancing with a young witch and singing a lewd love song, memory holds him in her power, calling up, not echoes, but a prophetic vision—the eidolon of Margaret. He sees

“Alone and far, a girl most pale and fair  
She falters on her way, scarce knowing,  
As if with fettered feet that stay her going.

Forsooth, the eyes they are of one whom dying  
No hand with loving pressure closed;

And strange, around her fairest throat  
A single scarlet band is gleaming  
No broader than a knife-blade seeming!”

The Dismal Day scene which connects the Walpurgis night with the Dungeon scene (the intervening Intermezzo Oberon and Titania’s Golden Wedding being a

later interpolation) although not in the "Fragment" was a part of the Göchhausen "Faust." The original prose form of the manuscript is retained.

At the opening of the scene Faust has in some way learned the true significance of the Broken Eidolon, and that Margaret is "In misery! In despair! Long wretchedly astray on the face of the earth and now imprisoned!" He turns upon Mephistopheles, who had in the meantime lulled him with "insipid dissipations." He invokes the "mighty, glorious Spirit," who has vouchsafed to appear to him, demanding why he is fettered to such a felon-comrade, and then, somewhat inconsistently, demands of this comrade that he shall take him to Margaret. Mephistopheles warns him of the risk he will incur in returning to the scene of Valentine's death, but Faust replies: "Take me thither, I say, and liberate her!" From this point it is Faust who commands and employs Mephistopheles to carry out plans, which, when not directly expiatory in purpose, are certainly not such as Mephistopheles would choose.

The uncanny "Night" scene, of six lines, in which Faust and Mephistopheles are seen speeding on black horses past the Raven-Stone, the place of execution, around which a witches'-guild is "soaring up, sweeping down, bowing and bending," part of the mediaeval setting, is an apt introduction to the last, the awful Dungeon scene.

In the final scene, the Dungeon scene, Faust, with a lamp and a bunch of keys, stands before an iron door, through which Margaret's voice is heard singing a weird old folk-song. At first mistaking him for the headsman, she begs for mercy:

"And I am yet so young, so young!  
And now death comes, and ruin!  
I, too, was fair, and that was my undoing.  
My love was near, but now he's far;  
Torn lies the wreath, scattered the blossoms are.  
Seize me not thus so violently!  
Spare me! What have I done to thee?"

At length in the "midst of the wrathful, infernal derision" (memories of the past made present by her delirium) she recognizes the voice of her lover. She clasps him in her embrace, the prison vanishes, and she is again in Martha's garden, where she was wont to wait his coming. At once she notices the lack of passion in his embrace, that his lips are cold as if they had unlearned kissing. Faust, promising to caress her when they are free, urges haste, as the night flies. Margaret, even in her delirium, feels that outside the prison there is only the grave for her. Dark specters, conjured up by memory, return, and she sees her struggling child trying to rise; her mother with heavy, nodding head beckons to her; her lover's hand, as he tries to draw her away, seems wet with blood; she hears the death-bell toll; she sees the white wand broken over her head (in token that her life is forfeited to the law); she feels herself seized and bound, and the bright blade quivering at her throat, and "dumb lies the world like the grave."

As Mephistopheles appears outside at the door, saying that there is no time for delay, she is overcome with fear at the sight of his face. She feels that notwithstanding her past, with him she has no part. Her dungeon becomes a "holy place," and fearlessly she gives herself up to the "judgment of God."

"Thine am I, Father! rescue me!  
Ye angels, holy cohorts, guard me,  
Camp around, and from evil ward me!  
Henry! I shudder to think of thee."

Mephistopheles cries out, "She is judged!" but a voice from above says, "She is saved!" Mephistopheles drags Faust away, while from within a voice is heard growing ever fainter as it calls, "Henry! Henry!"

Part II, completed in 1832, is the work of Goethe's mature years and his old age. Emerson says of it: "In the menstrum of this man's wit, the past and present ages, and their religions, politics, and modes of thinking, are dissolved into archetypes and ideas." Many of the lyrical effusions are of surpassing beauty. One of the finest is the monologue in the opening scene. Many years are supposed to have intervened since Margaret's death. Faust, awakening on a flowery turf, says:

"Life's pulses now with fresher force awaken  
To greet the mild ethereal twilight o'er me;  
This night, thou, Earth, hast also stood unshaken,  
And now thou breathest new refreshed before me,  
And now beginnest, all thy gladness granting,  
A vigorous resolution to restore me,  
To seek that highest life for which I'm panting."

It does not belong to the scope of this book to attempt an interpretation of this portion of the great poem which still occupies and baffles critics. Some knowledge of Part II is, however, necessary to the best understanding of Part I. Of especial import are the closing scenes.

At the end of the fourth scene of the last act, Faust stands at midnight on the balcony of his palace which commands a view of the vast realm,—that is, of the stretches of marshy coast land which at his request the

emperor gave him, and which by the enforced aid of Mephistopheles he has converted into habitable land. This victory over colossal forces of nature is the materialization of Faust's own most cherished ideas. Yet he is not happy. The source of his discontent lies in this: He had commanded Mephistopheles to remove a stubborn old couple from their hut, which obstructed the view from the palace, to the goodly estate especially chosen for their need. Mephistopheles in carrying out the command caused the death of the old people, who with their hut were consumed by fire. As he gazes down towards the smoldering ruins, from which the wind blows smoke and vapor, Faust perceives a shade-like presence hovering towards the palace.

In the next scene, the cloud dissolves itself into four gray women. We may imagine Faust still standing upon the balcony while the phantoms try the door below:

*First.* My name it is Want.

*Second.* And mine, it is Guilt.

*Third.* And mine, it is Care.

*Fourth.* Necessity, mine.

*Three together.* The portal is bolted, we cannot get in:  
The owner is rich, we've no business within.

*Care.* Ye Sisters, ye neither can enter, nor dare;  
But the keyhole is free for the entrance of Care.

Care disappears, entering the palace through the keyhole while the others leave, saying:

“The clouds are in motion, and cover each star!  
Behind there, behind! from afar, from afar,  
He cometh, our Brother! he comes, he is  
Death!”

Faust, who from above has half overheard the weird conversation, now enters the palace.

*Faust.* Four saw I come, but those that went were three;  
The sense of what they said was hid from me,  
But something like "Necessity" I heard;  
Thereafter "Death," a gloomy, threatening word!

In the lines which follow he expresses his desire to be rid of Magic's fell creations (it will be recalled that he invoked the aid of Magic before the apparition of the Earth-Spirit in the beginning of Part I), to be again simply man, such as he was before seeking liberty in the obscure. He hears the portal jar, but no one enters. Agitated he inquires, "Is any one here?" Care, or Worry, makes her presence and mission known, but Faust defies the "ill-omened" specter, and is not willing to recognize her power. In return Care, breathing upon him, says:

"So feel it now: my curse thou'l find,  
When forth from thee I've swiftly passed!  
Throughout their whole existence men are blind;  
So, Faust, be thou like them at last!"

But as his outward sight is lost, so much the brighter burns the light within. He will not rest until the great work is finished; what if he cannot see, "One mind suffices for a thousand hands." Meanwhile in the great outer court of the palace Mephistopheles, who has long felt Faust's end approaching, orders the Lemures to dig a grave. With mocking gestures the demoniac creatures, whom Goethe conceives as loosely hung together of "sinew, ligament, and bone," dig while they sing an adaptation of the grave-digger's song in "Hamlet," probably found by Goethe in "Percy's Reliques." At this moment Faust comes out, blindly groping his way by the door-posts; he has heard the clattering spades which he supposes are toiling to complete the sea-wall. He is a

century old; the open grave yawns before him, but his sightless eyes look over it into the distance while he says:

“Before the hills a marshy plain  
Infects what I so long have been retrieving;  
This stagnant pool likewise to drain  
Were now my latest and my best achieving.  
To many millions let me furnish soil,  
Though not secure, yet free to active toil?  
Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth  
At once, with comfort on the newest Earth,  
And swiftly settled on the hill’s firm base,  
Created by the bold, industrious race.  
A land like Paradise here, round about;  
Up to the brink the tide may roar without,  
And though it gnaw, to burst with force the limit,  
By common impulse all unite to hem it.  
Yes! to this thought I hold with firm persistence;  
The last result of wisdom stamps it true:  
He only earns his freedom and existence,  
Who daily conquers them anew.  
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away  
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day.”

In contemplation of this inspiring picture of a free people guarding by their own efforts their own free soil, Faust finds the supreme moment, and exclaims:

“Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!  
The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,  
In æons perish—they are there—  
In proud forefeeling of such lofty bliss,  
I now enjoy the highest Moment—this!”

He sinks back; the Lemures take him and lay him on the ground while Mephistopheles, who cannot understand the joys of altruism, mockingly says:

“No joy could sate him, and suffice no bliss!  
To catch but shifting shapes was his endeavor:  
The latest, poorest, emptiest Moment—this—  
He wished to hold it fast forever.  
Me he resisted in such vigorous wise,  
But Time is lord, on earth the old man lies.  
The clock stands still—”

Attending the flight of the spirit, Mephistopheles orders the Jaws of Hell to open, and summons hosts of stout and lean devils to his aid. Suddenly a Glory shines forth from above, and the Heavenly Host appears. The verses of the angelic chorus alternate with the jeering monologues and commands of Mephistopheles. The demons are beaten back by roses of love and gratitude cast down upon them by the “penitent,” the “glorious,” and angels bear away the immortal part of Faust. In the closing scene, as they soar to ever higher planes, angels sing:

“The noble Spirit now is free,  
And saved from evil scheming:  
Whoe'er aspires unweariedly  
Is not beyond redeeming.  
And if he feels the grace of Love  
That from On High is given,  
The Blessed Hosts, that wait above,  
Shall welcome him to Heaven!”

The approach of “The Glorious One,” with “star-crown tender,” the “pure,” the “Heavenly Queen,” is proclaimed in words which suggest a beautiful picture:

“Light clouds are circling  
Around her splendor,  
Penitent women  
Of natures tender,  
Her knees embracing,”

As Mater Gloriosa soars into space, the Chorus of Women Penitents sings:

“To heights thou’rt speeding  
Of endless Eden:  
Receive our pleading,  
Transcendent Maiden,  
With Mercy laden!”

and Mary Magdalena, the woman of Samaria, and Mary of Egypt implore forgiveness for one

“Who but once forgot, transgressing,  
Who her loving error saw not.”

Now one of the penitent women draws nearer with words which recall a prayer heard at a way-side shrine:

“Incline, O Maiden,  
With Mercy laden,  
In light unfading,  
Thy gracious countenance upon my bliss!  
My lover, my lover,  
His trials over  
In yonder world, returns to me in this!”

Then this penitent, who on earth bore the name of Margaret, implores that it may be granted to her to instruct him who dazzled by the “Day’s new glare” scarce divines

“His heritage of new-born Being.”

The Mater Gloriosa replies:

“Rise, thou, to higher spheres! Conduct him,  
Who, feeling thee, shall follow there!”

The often quoted words of the Chorus Mysticus (of necessity emphasized as the key to a right interpretation) end the drama:

“All things transitory  
But as symbols are sent:  
Earth’s insufficiency  
Here grows to Event:

The Indescribable,  
Here it is done:  
The Woman-Soul leadeth us  
Upward and on!"

What Homer is to Greece, Shakespeare to England, Goethe is to Germany. And this he is on account of his "Faust." No work of his exhibits better his power of imagination, his depth of thought, his largeness of mind. Goethe's "Faust" is in two parts. There is among capable critics no controversy about the First Part and its place in literature; about the Second Part, however, there is a wide difference of opinion, and the discussion will probably never cease. The First Part deals with the life of the people of which Faust is one; the Second shows him at the court and in the ruling circles of society, and here he is equally at home. The First Part is a history of guilt, of Faust descending from loftiest heights to lowest depths; the Second of redemption, of Faust working out his salvation compelled by the stronger impulses of his better nature, and rising to undreamed heights of happiness. While planning great designs for the welfare of his fellowmen, he dies in the presentiment and actual enjoyment of the highest bliss a human being can attain. Faust is a German; his character is the mature fruit of German civilization. Not alone the German feels the power of real life and his own personal experience in the poem, but every human being that, aspiring to goodness, has longed and labored—and failed, and every man who, searching and striving for truth, has suffered bitter disappointment. Goethe's "Faust" in a certain sense is a fragment—such is human life, which it reflects in its different stages of development. Neither scientific research (Part I), nor

the æsthetic spirit (Part II), satisfies the longings of the human heart. Beneficent activity alone gives value to life, inner satisfaction, and consolation in sorrow. Nothing but serious work for high ideals brings contentment and the conviction, that whatever the individual accomplishes in the service of truth and goodness does not perish but ennobles man and promotes the common cause of humanity.

## CHAPTER VI

SCHILLER: BALLADS AND "THOUGHT POEMS"  
("GEDANKENDICHTUNGEN"); "THE SONG  
OF THE BELL",

1759-1800

Distinguished alike for the splendor of his intellectual faculties and the elevation of his tastes and feelings, he has left behind him in his works a noble emblem of these great qualities, and the reputation which he thus enjoys, and has merited, excites our attention the more on considering the circumstances under which it was acquired.—*Carlyle*.

Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller, the youngest of the Weimar group of poets, was born at Marbach in Würtemberg, November 10, 1759 (Wieland was twenty-six, Herder fifteen, Goethe ten years his senior).

On the breaking out of the Seven Years' War, his father, who had received the training of a barber surgeon, entered the army of Karl Eugen, Duke of Würtemberg, where he rose to the rank of captain. He afterwards turned his attention to agriculture and forestry, and became an expert in arboriculture. His mother, whose character possibly suggested some of the traits of Hedwig, in "Wilhelm Tell," was a tender, affectionate woman whose life was entirely devoted to her family. In 1766, after having served three years as recruiting officer in Lorch, Captain Schiller was transferred to the ducal residence then at Ludwigsburg, where he eventually became



JOHANN CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER.



park-keeper. Here Friedrich, or "Fritz," was for five years a pupil in the Latin school. About 1770 the duke, who had led a life remarkable for profligacy, even at a time when the standard of morality for princes was not high, experienced what he was pleased to call a conversion. From all the pulpits of Würtemberg he caused his repentance, and promise of amendment, to be proclaimed. One of his first projects, in the rôle of father of his people, was the founding at Château Solitude of the school, which in 1775 was removed to Stuttgart and subsequently raised to the rank of a university, under the name of Karls-schule (Karl's School). Taken all in all, the school was not bad for the time; many of the professors were scholars and excellent men. The sculptor Dannecker, the naturalist Cuvier, and many other noted men received their education here. Sycophancy was, it is true, at a premium, for adulation of princes was part of the etiquette of the day. One of the worst features was the separation of the pupils from all intercourse with their families, whom they were never allowed to visit; written communications were rigidly inspected.

On the 17th of August, 1773, young Schiller, in compliance with what was virtually a command of the duke, although put in the form of an invitation, entered, as student of jurisprudence, the school, then known as the Military Academy. Two years later, when the school was removed to Stuttgart, and a medical faculty added, he exchanged law for medicine; not because he liked the study of medicine, but because he disliked law. After seven years of study he was graduated from this department; his record for scholarship was merely fair. On leaving the academy, Schiller took with him in manuscript

a drama, "The Robbers," written surreptitiously while in school. Failing to find a publisher for his work, he published it anonymously, at his own expense, the next year, 1781.

The play, suggested by a real event told in one of the Suabian periodicals of the time, is briefly outlined as follows: Count von Moor, whose estates lie in Franconia, has two sons, the elder, Karl, a student at the University of Leipzig, of high though somewhat vague ideals, indulging in wild and expensive pranks, as many German students do, contracts debts. Acknowledging frankly his mismanagement, he asks his father's pardon. His plea would have been well received by Count von Moor had it not been for his envious younger brother. In order to obtain the estate which primogeniture gives to Karl, by means of devilish hypocrisy Franz tries to alienate the affections of his father and to win for himself the love of Amalia, his brother's intended bride. Instead of the expected paternal pardon, Karl receives the announcement of his father's curse conveyed to him by a forged letter of his brother's, who in order to obtain his selfish ends does not shrink from fraud and forgery. Driven to despair by the thought of being an outcast (even Amalia, according to the vile misrepresentations, had renounced his love) Karl, fleeing from civilization to the wild Bohemian forests, accepts the offer of a band of robbers to become their captain. But even in this life he does not lose the nobility of his nature. Conceiving himself as called upon to restore the social order, he restrains his men from mere deeds of cruelty, and protecting the poor and oppressed, assails the miserly rich and their ill-gotten wealth. Franz, not succeeding in his efforts to kill his father through

grief caused by fictitious reports concerning his elder son, simulates the count's death and imprisons or rather buries him alive, in an old vault where a faithful servant saves him from starvation by supplying him with the necessary food. Here Karl, returning from the Bohemian forests, finds his father, whose disclosures reveal the true nature of things. The castle is stormed by the robbers, Franz hangs himself, and Amalia, who, keeping her troth, had rejected all offers of the younger brother, at her own request is killed by Karl, who, when accepting the leadership, had sworn allegiance to his robbers for life. The old count now actually dies of grief. The robber captain, upon whose head a price had been set, delivers himself into the hands of a deserving poor man to be given up to the judgment of the courts, thus restoring the respect for the law of the land.

It will be readily seen that "The Robbers" is a drama of the Storm and Stress period. The plot, the delineation of character, and above all the language, is not free from gross exaggerations, but in spite of all its monstrosities, the play shows the creative power of genius. Its young author at once became famous.

It is at least questionable whether for a poor young man Schiller was so badly off at the duke's school, but there can be no doubt that he had a right to be dissatisfied with the position assigned to him on leaving. His duties as regimental surgeon were distasteful to him, his pay was only eighteen guldens monthly (the gulden is a coin of about forty cents), with no outside practice allowed. It was not possible for him to resign, and flight, even if successful, might involve sad consequences for his father. Considering this harrowing and distressing state of

affairs, it is truly remarkable that the young poet had the heart to write a new play, edit a magazine, and address erotic verses to "Laura." On January 12, 1782, "The Robbers" appeared on the Mannheim stage, and created a sensation. In May it was repeated. Schiller was present at both representations, but the second time his unauthorized absence was discovered by the duke, who imposed upon him two weeks' imprisonment. Finally matters were brought to a crisis by his sovereign's command that he should "write no more comedies," but devote himself to his profession, under penalty of being cashiered. In reply to Schiller's letter of remonstrance, the irascible duke threatened him with arrest if he should address him again on the subject. Schiller, remembering the unjust imprisonment of the poet Daniel Schubart for ten years without trial, knew the duke to be quite capable of carrying out his threat, and determined to flee. Accompanied by his friend Andreas Streicher, who in true German fashion shared with him his meager purse, he effected his escape from Stuttgart, taking with him in manuscript his second play, "Fiesco."

The haughty and overbearing conduct of the nephew of Andrea Doria (1468–1560), the celebrated Duke of Genoa, causes a conspiracy headed by the noble and universally esteemed Count Fiesco. The ducal house having been overthrown, Fiesco, in spite of earnest warnings, is himself about to assume the title of duke. To frustrate his ambitious designs the stern republican, Verrina, pushes him into the sea, on the very night of the revolt.

Compared with "The Robbers," this second drama lacks spontaneity. Its theme is, however, more difficult to handle, as—the young dramatist's first move in this

direction—it is based upon history. “Fiesco” was twice refused by Count Dalberg, the cautious director of the Mannheim theater, and Schiller, sorely in need of money, was glad to accept the cordial invitation of Frau von Wolzogen, the mother of one of his school friends, to occupy, during the absence of the family, a cottage at Bauerbach, a small village near Meiningen. Here he finished his third drama, “Love and Intrigue.”

This drama is in some respects a return to the revolutionary spirit of “The Robbers.” Ferdinand von Walter, a young man of honor and nobility of soul, loves an amiable, innocent young girl, Louise Miller, who reciprocates his love. Ferdinand is the favorite of a prince who, to buy jewelry for his mistress, sells thousands of his subjects as mercenaries. Ferdinand’s father is the all-powerful minister of state, the goal of whose ambition is the monarchical favor, and for whom the words of honor and virtue are meaningless sounds. Louise is the daughter of a town musician, a simple girl of the people, but noble-minded like her lover. Both perish by taking poison. Their tragic death is due to the intrigues of a thoroughly corrupt court society, and of a selfish prince, who sees in his subjects beings created to minister to his own licentious desires.

“Love and Intrigue” is a masterpiece in the skilful evolution of its plot, in the truthful delineation of character, and in the profound reality of its passionate diction in defense of right and justice against encroaching oppression. However crude, there is something in this language of youthful passion, pouring forth from the violent emotions of a stormy heart, which we miss in more mature and artistic works.

In 1784 this drama and his "Fiesco," in a revised form, were brought out in the Mannheim theater. "Love and Intrigue" scored a great success. It was played on all the stages of Germany, even at Stuttgart. During this year, in which he was officially connected with the Mannheim theater, he became acquainted with Charlotte von Kalb, a woman of romantic disposition, unhappily married to a spendthrift husband, who left her alone while he spent her fortune for his own pleasure. Previous to their meeting, Schiller, a young poet in love with love, had had several *affaires du cœur*, none of which seems to have cost him more than passing pangs. His feeling for Charlotte von Kalb was certainly much deeper. While under the influence of this passion he wrote the two poems "The Conflict" and "Resignation." The first two stanzas of both of these lyrics may suffice to give an idea of the poet's mood:

#### THE CONFLICT

No! I this conflict longer will not wage,  
    The conflict duty claims—the giant task—  
Thy spells, O virtue, never can assuage  
    The heart's wild fire—this offering do not ask!  
  
True, I have sworn—a solemn vow have sworn—  
    That I myself will curb the self within;  
Yet take thy wreath, no more it shall be worn—  
    Take back thy wreath, and leave me free to sin.

#### RESIGNATION

Yes! even I was in Arcadia born,  
    And in mine infant ears  
A vow of rapture was by Nature sworn;  
Yes! even I was in Arcadia born,  
    And yet my short spring gave me only—tears!

Once blooms, and only once, life's youthful May;  
For me its bloom hath gone.  
The silent God—O brethren, weep to-day—  
The silent God hath quenched my torch's ray,  
And the vain dream hath flown.

Eventually a new love for another Charlotte cured him of this infatuation.

No poet has written higher eulogies of friendship than Schiller, and no man had truer cause. His friendship with Gottfried Körner (afterwards father of the young soldier-poet who fell on the battle-field), begun by correspondence in 1784, was continued until death. Körner, a young man of wealth and culture, assisted his friend both with his purse and by his sympathetic interest in his works. They did not meet until July, 1785. After Körner's marriage, which took place the same year, Schiller made his home with his friend in their suburban cottage at Loschwitz near Dresden. Here he completed his "Don Carlos," which was published in 1787.

Philip II of Spain, by his despotic spirit, has forfeited the love of his fellowmen. He has also lost the affections of his son, the woman of whose choice the father had married. Marquis von Posa counsels Philip his sovereign to give freedom to the nations under his rule. Although shocked by his ideas of popular liberty, the marquis gains the king's confidence. He then persuades his friend Don Carlos to go secretly to the Netherlands and to win the provinces through benevolent and liberal conduct. Posa tries to deceive the king by representing himself as a traitor and as in love with the queen (of which sentiment Don Carlos had been justly suspected). His plan by this ruse to turn Philip's attention from Don Carlos and the

Netherlands fails. Both the marquis and his friend perish before they are able to carry out their plans.

While by a change in the original project, the unity of the action has been impaired, the language of the play, from an artistic point of view, indicates a decided progress. The hopelessness of despair in the former dramas is replaced by the glad anticipation of a time when princes and subjects will work in harmony for the common weal, and when servitude and despotism will be overthrown by a universal freedom of thought.

Since 1784, when he had been introduced to the Duke of Weimar by Frau von Kalb, Schiller had borne the title of Weimar councilor, bestowed upon him by the duke in recognition of his literary merit. He now determined to visit this German Athens, a plan which was carried out in July, 1787. Goethe, as previously stated, was still in Italy, and the duke and duchess were absent. But the dowager duchess Amalia, Wieland, Herder, and Frau von Kalb were there. His reception by the two poets was less cordial than he had expected, and at first he was tempted to leave Weimar before the return of the duke. He stayed on, however, and in the fall was introduced by his friend Wilhelm von Wolzogen to Frau von Lengefeld and her two attractive daughters, the younger of whom afterwards became his wife, and the elder, later his biographer, the wife of his friend. The family was then living in seclusion at Rudolstadt, but Charlotte spent the winter in Weimar, where she had been presented at court by Frau von Stein, who, as well as Goethe, was very fond of the engaging young girl. It was at Frau von Lengefeld's that Schiller was introduced to Goethe on the 7th of September, 1788.

On the whole, Schiller did not find his position in Weimar to his taste, and when he received notice that he had been appointed professor of history at Jena he decided to accept the position, although he was troubled with doubts as to his qualifications. Soon afterwards he became engaged to Charlotte von Lengefeld. They were married quietly on the 22d of February, 1790, and set up their household on a very slender income. Schiller's regular salary, which, however, was somewhat increased by students' fees, was barely two hundred thalers, and Charlotte received as a dowry an allowance of one hundred and fifty thalers annually from her mother. In 1802, at the request of the Duke of Weimar, Schiller was ennobled by the Emperor Francis II, and his wife had the pleasure of restoring the much-valued "von" to her name. In this marriage Schiller found the full realization of his dream of a happy home.

His connection with the University of Jena, his historical and later his philosophical studies, gave to his mind that poise which Goethe had acquired by a broader experience of life. Schiller had, physically, never been a strong man. He was fully aware of this fact. There is a touching passage in one of his letters addressed to Goethe dated August 31, 1794: "It happens quite frequently that my strong imagination interferes with my abstract thought, and that cold reason on the other hand, interferes with my poetical ideas. If I can master these two forces so that I can set bounds to either at will, a happy lot is mine, but, alas! after having begun rightly to know and use my moral faculties, a disease threatens to undermine my physical powers. I hardly shall have time to complete a great and general inner revolu-

tion, but I shall do what I can, and maybe, if at last the building collapses, I shall have rescued from the conflagration what was worth preserving."

In January, 1791, he had a catarrhal fever, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered. A second attack in the spring of the same year left his lungs in so weakened a condition that he had to discontinue his lectures in the university. At this critical juncture he received through the agency of a friend an annual pension of a thousand thalers for three years from the Duke of Holstein-Augustenburg and the Danish minister, Count von Schimmelmann. To this timely aid (which the Duke of Weimar was too poor to give) Schiller owed the partial recovery of his health, and the leisure necessary for his work.

In 1793 he published his "History of the Thirty Years' War." In this publication, as well as in the preceding "Revolt of the Netherlands," he aimed to give to historical writing literary attractiveness. That he succeeded is proved by the applause of his contemporaries and the general favor these histories find with the reading public of to-day.

In 1794 was begun the correspondence with Goethe relating to *Die Horen*, resulting in a friendship without parallel in literary history. This last decade of his life was Schiller's most productive period. Besides the "Xenia" (mentioned in the last chapter), there belong to these years his five immortal dramas (to be discussed in the next chapter), and most of his ballads and philosophical "thought poems," including "The Song of the Bell."

BALLADS AND "THOUGHT POEMS" ("GEDANKENDICHTUNGEN"); "THE SONG OF THE BELL"

1797-1800

In his essay on "Naïve and Sentimental Poetry" Schiller assigns to Goethe, with some envy and admiration, the place of naïve poet, while he calls himself sentimental (*i.e.*, reflective). The truth of this self-criticism becomes evident even on a cursory perusal of his poetry. Already in his earlier lyrics the philosophical, speculative spirit is predominant. In "Resignation" man resigns his claims to a pleasurable enjoyment of life for hope of future reward and for a consoling faith; in the "Gods of Greece" the shallow view of life resulting from a one-sided Christianity and the narrowing study of natural science is compared with the poetic grasp of the ancient Greek deifying nature and man; in the "Hymn to Joy" the "daughter of Elysium" is celebrated as uniting men in a great common brotherhood looking up to a loving Father beyond the stars.

Though Schiller's ballads lack the unreserved spontaneity and simple naïvety of the folk-song (a quality that characterizes Goethe's poetry) they have a foremost place in the German heart. They are favorites of the young people, are recited at school festivals, and are made the themes of numberless essays. In a certain sense they, too, might be called thought poems, for, dressed in the attractive garb of an interesting story, all of them contain a moral lesson. Thus the "Glove" might be said to illustrate the thought that permanency of love is guaranteed only by the finer qualities of a woman's character; the "Ring of

Polycrates" (based upon a tale of Herodotus and the Greek conception of the envy of the gods), warns men not to trust Fortune, however firm and constant she may seem to be; "The Cranes of Ibucus" demonstrates that the poet, the man of creative art, is under the special care of the gods, whose mouthpiece he is, and who are quick to avenge his murder (the awe-inspiring verses of the song of the Furies in the poem are based upon the "Eumenides" of *Æschylus*); the divine protection of youth and innocence is shown in "Fridolin" or "The Walk to the Iron Foundry"; the "Fight with the Dragon" teaches that the victory of self-subdued humility is greater than the glory won by the deeds of courage and heroism on the field of battle; the "Hostage" shows how true and genuine friendship overcomes all obstacles and is equal to the severest tests. While in these and in later ballads ("Hero and Leander," "Kassandra," "Count of Hapsburg"), a definite thought is pointed out or intimated, the story itself is so well told, the facts of the tale so happily arranged, that their popular favor rests even more on these traits than on the underlying lesson; the "thought poems" give a direct poetical expression of the poet's philosophy of life. They are in this respect akin to Goethe's confessions in "Faust." Their character is more or less clearly indicated in such titles as "Power of Song," "Dignity of Womanhood," "Yoked Pegasus," "The Veiled Image," "Ideal and Life." To this class belong also three larger poems (often grouped together under the name of culture historic poems), "The Artists," "The Walk" and "The Song of the Bell." The first of these was written when the poet was thirty years old, the last was published more than ten

years later. "The Artists" reviews the history of man and his gradual rise from primitive crudeness to his present state of culture through the ever-saving power of art. In "The Walk" the poet, who is out for a stroll, hails the mountain with the glittering, purple-dyed summit, the plain with its murmuring lindens, and the balmy breezes; he rejoices in the changeable colors of the blooming meadow, in the song of the lark, and in the resounding bells of the flocks in the fields. In meditative mood he reflects how man follows the tune through the air, the ray through the ether, and how he seeks the familiar law in the dread miracles of chance and looks for the never-changing pole in "the phenomena's flight." Thus man may be taught and guided by a thinking and loving observation of nature, which the poet thus addresses in the closing lines:

"Kindly Nature, with grace thou dost revere the old law!  
Ever the same, for the man in Thy faithful hands thou preservest  
That which the child in its sport, that which the youth lent to Thee;  
  
At the same breast thou dost suckle the ceaselessly varying ages;  
Under the same azure vault, over the same verdant earth;  
Races, near and remote, in harmony wander together—  
See, even Homer's own sun looks on us, too, with a smile."

The most widely known of the three poems is "The Song of the Bell," which by translations has become the property of many nations.

Before giving an analysis of this song, in order to supplement the sketch of the poet's speculative philosophy in his thought poems, a shorter "The Words of Belief," will be inserted here in full, and in addition the last three stanzas (almost a third) of "To the Ideal."

## THE WORDS OF BELIEF

Three Words will I name thee—around and about,  
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;  
But they had not their birth in the being without,  
And the heart, not the lip, must their oracle be!  
And all worth in the man shall forever be o'er,  
When in those Three Words he believes no more.

Man is made free—Man by birthright is free,  
Though the tyrant may deem him but born for his tool.  
Whatever the shout of the rabble may be—  
Whatever the ranting misuse of the fool,  
Still fear not the Slave when he breaks from his chain,  
For the Man made a Freeman grows safe in his gain.

And Virtue is more than a shade or a sound,  
And Man may her voice, in his being, obey;  
And though ever he slip on the stony ground,  
Yet ever again to the godlike way,  
To the science of Good though the Wise may be blind,  
Yet the practice is plain to the childlike mind.

And a God there is!—over Space, over Time,  
While the Human Will rocks, like a reed, to and fro,  
Lives the Will of the Holy—a Purpose Sublime,  
A Thought woven over creation below;  
Changing and shifting the All we inherit,  
But changeless through all One Immutable Spirit!

Hold fast the Three Words of Belief—though about  
From the lip to the lip, full of meaning, they flee;  
Yet they take not their birth from the being without—  
But a voice from within must their oracle be;  
And never all worth in the Man can be o'er,  
Till in those Three Words he believes no more.

## FROM "TO THE IDEAL"

The holy crown which Fame was wreathing,  
Behold! the mean man's temples wore,  
And but for one short spring-day breathing,  
Bloom'd Love—the Beautiful—no more!  
And ever stiller yet, and ever  
The barren path more lonely lay,  
Till scarce from waning Hope could quiver  
A glance along the gloomy way.

Who, loving, lingered yet to guide me,  
When all her boon companions fled,  
Who stands consoling yet beside me,  
And follows to the House of Dread?  
Thine Friendship—thine the hand so tender,  
Thine the balm dropping on the wound,  
Thy task, the load more light to render,  
O earliest sought and soonest found!

And Thou, so pleased, with her uniting,  
To charm the soul-storm into peace,  
Sweet Toil, in toil itself delighting,  
That more it labored, less could cease,  
Tho' but by grains thou aid'st the pile  
The vast Eternity uprears,  
At least thou strik'st from Time the while  
Life's debt—the minutes, days, and years.

"The Song of the Bell" gives a picture of German domestic life in its varied aspects. It would be difficult to find a better emblem than the bell, which is so closely connected with all events in the history of the individual German citizen. The poet's recognition of its mission is well worded in the lines occurring in the poem:

“ Whatever fate to man may bring,  
     Whatever weal or woe befall,  
     That metal tongue shall backward ring,  
     The warning moral drawn from all.”

The opening words of the song are an admonition addressed by the master bell-founder to his fellow-crafts:

“ Fast, in its prison-walls of earth,  
     Awaits the mold of baked clay.  
     Up, comrades, up, and aid the birth—  
     The bell that shall be born to-day!  
     Who would honor obtain,  
     With the sweat and the pain,  
     The praise that man gives to the master must buy—  
     But the blessing withal must descend from on high!”

As early as 1788, Schiller had spoken enthusiastically to Frau von Wolzogen and others about the plan of the poem. He had acquired all the necessary knowledge of detail by frequent visits to a bell-foundry. The moment in the progress of the work in the foundry is well chosen. The conduit has been dug, and the clay mold is ready, so that the preparations for the real work of casting may begin.

The second stanza contains the master's reflections about the work in hand:

“ And well an earnest word beseems  
     The work the earnest hand prepares;  
     Its load more light the labor deems,  
     When sweet discourse the labor shares.  
     So let us ponder—nor in vain—  
     What strength can work when labor wills;  
     For who would not the fool disdain  
     Who ne'er designs what he fulfils?  
     And well it stamps our human race,  
     And hence the gift to understand,  
     That man within the heart should trace  
     Whate'er he fashions with the hand.”

In the whole poem there is only one speaker. All we hear are words from the lips of the bell-founder. They are either words of command accompanying the progress of the casting of the bell, or advisory meditations on the various events in which the bell is going to play a part. Orders and counsels alternate, their different character is expressed by difference in form and meter, the commands of the master being skilfully connected with his philosophical speculations. There are nine such double parts with an introduction (the admonition of the master) and a conclusion welcoming the bell, glittering in the sunlight, as it is lifted from its "earth-grave." The first six parts deal with the life of the individual and the family, the other three with the life of the citizen and the commonwealth.

Wilhelm von Humboldt said that he knew of no poem which in so small a compass opens so large a vista, and which shows life in its most important epochs and events running through all the scales of deepest human emotions. There is hardly a line in the whole poem that has not become a "winged word" quoted in and out of place. In order to be valued rightly, the poem must be read as a whole. A translation is easily accessible to every one. The subjoined passages are merely to illustrate the poet's method:

a. *Referring to marriage.*

Browning o'er, the pipes are simmering,  
Dip this wand of clay within;  
If like glass the wand be glimmering,  
Then the casting may begin.  
Brisk, brisk now, and see  
If the fusion flow free;  
If (happy and welcome indeed were the sign);  
If the hard and the ductile united combine.

For still where the strong is betrothed to the weak,  
 And the stern in sweet marriage is blent with the meek,  
     Rings the concord harmonious, both tender and strong:  
 So be it with thee, if forever united  
 The heart to the heart flows in one, love-delighted;  
     Illusion is brief, but repentance is long.

b. *Referring to death.*

From the steeple  
     Tolls the bell,  
     Deep and heavy,  
     The death-knell!

Guiding with dirge-note—solemn, sad, and slow,  
 To the last home earth's weary wanderers know,  
     It is that worshiped wife—  
     It is that faithful mother!

Whom the dark prince of shadows leads benighted,  
 From the dear arm where oft she hung delighted  
     Far from those blithe companions, born  
     Of her, and blooming in their morn;  
     On whom, when couched her heart above,  
     So often looked the mother-love!

c. *Referring to revolution (more especially the French Revolution).*

Now, its destined task fulfilled,  
     Asunder break the prison-mold;  
     Let the goodly bell we built,  
     Eye and heart alike behold.

The hammer down heave,  
     Till the cover it cleave:  
 For not till we shatter the wall of its cell  
 Can we lift from its darkness and bondage the bell.

To break the mold the master may,  
     If skilled the hand and ripe the hour,  
     But woe, when on its fiery way  
     The metal seeks itself to pour.  
 Frantic and blind, with thunder-knell,  
     Exploding from its shattered home,  
     And glaring forth, as from a hell,  
     Behold the red destruction come!

When rages strength that has no reason,  
There breaks the mold before the season;  
When numbers burst what bound before!  
Woe to the state that thrives no more!  
Yea, woe, when in the city's heart,  
    The latent spark to flame is blown;  
And millions from their silence start,  
    To claim, without a guide, their own!

Discordant howls the warning bell,  
    Proclaiming discord wide and far,  
And born but things of peace to tell,  
    Becomes the ghastliest voice of war:  
“Freedom! Equality!”—to blood  
    Rush the roused people at the sound!  
Through street, hall, palace, roars the flood,  
    And banded murder closes round!

“The Song of the Bell,” with its wonderful variety in expression and measure, has no parallel in literature, though it will easily occur to any American who reads the selected passages, that Longfellow received from it the suggestion for his “Building of the Ship.”

## CHAPTER VII

SCHILLER: "WILHELM TELL," THE DRAMA OF  
FREEDOM

1800-1805

To the Germans of the present day Schiller is the poet of liberty.—*Hjalmar H. Boyesen.*

With clear eye we look up to the greatness of the man, and to the splendid model for all intellectual work which is exhibited in that life of passion striving for the ideal.—*Words of Otto Brahm, as quoted by Calvin Thomas: "The Life and Works of Friedrich Schiller," p. 463.*

Of the five masterpieces upon which Schiller's fame as a dramatic poet chiefly rests, the first, "Wallenstein," was published in 1800, the second, "Maria Stuart," and the third, "The Maid of Orleans, in 1801, the fourth, "The Bride of Messina," in 1803, the fifth, "Wilhelm Tell," in 1804. In order to be in closer connection with the stage, Schiller had taken up his residence in Weimar. He did so at the request of Goethe, who, with his manifold other activities, combined the office of theatrical director.

When, after a pause of nine years (not considering the fragment entitled "The Misanthrope"), Schiller resumed his dramatic activity, it seems as if he took up the thread where he dropped it. In thought and form (he had changed prose to blank verse in "Don Carlos") his great dramatic masterpieces are a direct continuation of his earlier work in this line. The great trilogy "Wallen-

stein" occupied him as early as in 1796. It naturally grew out of his studies in history. The "History of the Thirty Years' War," published in 1793, was a direct preparation for this great, perhaps Schiller's greatest, drama, which really consists of two five-act dramas, "The Piccolomini" and "Wallenstein's Death," the former being preceded by a prelude; that is, a smaller introductory play, "Wallenstein's Camp." The "Camp" is of high artistic beauty, and presents a striking picture of the military and social life of the time of the Thirty Years' War. We do not see Wallenstein, but we feel his presence. The soldiers, gathered from all quarters of the globe, are animated by one spirit. Whatever their different nationalities, whatever their different traits and moods, they are unanimous in their praise of Wallenstein. When the Capuchin enters the camp and preaches against their God-forsaken conduct, they listen to his ranting lecture and laugh at his witty sallies, but when he attacks their leader, Wallenstein, he scarcely escapes abusive treatment. When, later on, rumors are heard that the emperor intends to divide Wallenstein's army in order to weaken his power, they most emphatically declare that they never will leave the man whom they love like a father.

The prelude is followed by "The Piccolomini." Wallenstein aspires to the imperial crown. He shrinks, however, from treason, although knowing of the harm the emperor intended by dividing his army. An alliance with Austria's enemy, the Swedes, is the way that naturally opens—he hesitates. A firm believer in astrology, he waits for an answer from the stars. His friends urge in vain, they try to persuade his generals to offer uncon-

ditional obedience and submission to Wallenstein's will. Their plan to surreptitiously obtain, after a gay carousal, the signatures of these officers fails through the presence of the general Octavio Piccolomini. Designated as Wallenstein's successor, he simulates friendship, secretly espousing the cause of the emperor and his own cause. His son Max, to whom he confides his plans, is an ardent admirer of Wallenstein, whose daughter Thekla he loves.

"Wallenstein's Death" announces in its title the fatal catastrophe. Wallenstein at last revolts, effecting the Swedish alliance. Max Piccolomini finds in battle the death he desires. Thekla is inconsolable and starts out to recover his body. Octavio, who has received his appointment as commander-in-chief from the emperor, by foul and treacherous means, induces the generals to leave Wallenstein. The soldiers, in whose eyes he has become a traitor, do likewise. Wallenstein goes to Eger, and is assassinated by Colonel Butler.

The only man remaining on the stage is Octavio, made prince by the emperor, a small compensation for the loss of his only son. "Wallenstein" was completed in 1799. (The "Camp" had been played at the opening of the season in the Weimar theater in October, 1798.)

The sad and awful catastrophe of "Wallenstein" never fails to deeply move the spectators. Wallenstein's character, as drawn by the poet, is open to censure. The unhappy love episode, so beautiful in its tragic conflict and conclusion, is unhistorical, but the life of the times of that most terrible Thirty Years' War is so impressively outlined that the picture will linger and endure in the mind forever. It is a valuable contribution to the history of German civilization—Goethe admired and praised the

great drama, which by the men of the time was heartily applauded, as it is now. It was no doubt partly due to this enthusiastic reception of his work that only a comparatively short time afterward, in June of the next year, 1800, "Mary Stuart" was acted. "Mary Stuart," accused of having aspired to the crown of England and of having entered into a conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth, is held prisoner in the castle of Fotheringay. But her spirit is unbroken. Bearing her sufferings in a spirit of repentance, as just punishments for her former sins, she does not falter in her conviction that her imprisonment in England is an act of outright injustice. Her friends, among them the nephew of Sir Paulet, to whose keeping she has been intrusted, conspire for her rescue; her enemies are bent upon her death. A meeting of the two queens, planned by Leicester, Elizabeth's favorite and Mary's secret friend, with a hope of reconciliation, only widens the gulf. An attempt against the life of Elizabeth furnishes a new pretext. The English queen signs Mary's death warrant without ordering its execution, which, however, is commanded and carried out by Burleigh, grand treasurer of England, from reasons of state an irreconcilable enemy of Mary. The latter dies like a saint. Elizabeth shifts the blame of Mary's sad fate upon Burleigh and others who helped her to accomplish what her heart most ardently wished. As often as Elizabeth is mentioned, the German youth couples with the name the unjust murder of Queen Mary, whose head is encircled with the halo of a martyr. The keen logic of argumentation in the play, the clear precision and beauty of its language, appeal strongly to the hearer. Besides, this drama is a masterpiece of dramatic technique.

Less than a year after the performance of "Mary Stuart" another drama was completed, "The Maid of Orleans." Joan of Arc is moved in her innermost soul by the deep distress of France, her country, caused by the English invasion. In her hours of solitude and prayer the Virgin Mary appears and requests her to liberate her fatherland by leading her countrymen into the fight. Having proved her divine commission by miracles, she is chosen leader. As long as she is with the army, the French are victorious, but the fortune of war turns after the capture of Joan by the English. Surrounded by her enemies and while hearing reports of the approaching defeat of her army in the battle fought in sight of the prison tower, she obtains strength from fervent prayer and tears her fetters asunder. Suddenly she appears on the field of the combatants, and after leading the French to victory she dies mortally wounded, but rejoicing, and blessed by her nation.

Schiller called "The Maid of Orleans" a romantic tragedy, and such it is. There is a strong admixture of the miraculous and romantic with the historical tradition; in fact, the whole drama is built upon a preternatural apparition. But in spite of this, Joan of Arc is of earth and human. Her capture is a result of personal guilt. She had broken her vow never to show mercy to an English soldier by yielding to the sudden impulse of love and by sparing the life of Lionel. She suffers for this vow-breach most intensely. Her countrymen desert her and her own father accuses her of being in compact with the evil spirit. Having freed herself from all earthly desires, she by this voluntary renunciation atones for her fault and becomes again the pure instrument in the hands of

God. While there are leanings toward the literary tendencies of the time in "Mary Stuart," this influence of the Romantic School is very pronounced in "The Maid of Orleans." Schiller was, however, not a blind follower of any literary school.

The next drama, "The Bride of Messina," completed in 1803, is an attempt to revive the antique drama by introducing the Greek chorus and the ancient idea of fate. Donna Isabella, the widowed queen of Messina, has at last succeeded in reconciling her sons, Don Manuel and Don Cesar, whose mutual hatred had divided the city into two hostile camps. In this happy moment she tells them of their sister, who up to this time has been concealed within the walls of a convent. Before her birth a dream of her father's had been interpreted to the effect that the daughter to be born would destroy his two sons and his whole house. When she was born, the father gave command to kill her, but the mother preserved her life. Isabella, too, had a dream which was interpreted as foretelling that the daughter was destined to unite in common love her two hostile brothers. Now, so the queen believes, this great moment has come. She tells her sons of her intention to send for their sister Beatrice, and the two brothers promise to send to their mother each his chosen bride. This chosen bride of the two brothers is one and the same person—their sister. Don Cesar, finding Beatrice in Don Manuel's arms, kills his brother, and after discovering the full truth, kills himself at the funeral. Thus both oracles are fulfilled.

The language of "The Bride of Messina" is music itself, the chorus songs belong to the best lyrics of Schiller's music. The bold innovations in form and thought,

the strange co-existence of pagan, Christian, and Mahomedan conceptions, do not impair its dramatic power. "The Bride of Messina" is not a mere tragedy of fate; the actions of the characters are self-determined and the natural product of individual will and endowments. That Schiller did not intend to inaugurate a literary school is evident by his own abandoning of the new path in his next and last drama, "Wilhelm Tell," selected for interpretation.

The enthusiasm with which Schiller's dramas were received has not abated during the succeeding generations. At the time they secured for their author not only fame, but a comfortable income. In the winter of 1804-1805 Schiller suffered from several attacks of his old enemy, catarrhal fever. Nevertheless he did not give up work. His vigorous will, which had long supplemented his feeble frame, seemed to be again victorious. When he was able to leave the house, his first visit was to Goethe, who was also ill. It is narrated that Goethe, so rarely demonstrative, clasped him in his arms as he entered. On the evening of the 27th of April, Goethe returned his visit. As Schiller was about to go to the theater, Goethe accompanied him to the door. They never met again. Schiller returned home with a violent chill, and on the 9th of May, 1805, he passed away.

In the stanzas quoted from his "thought poems" in the preceding chapter, Freedom, Virtue, God, Friendship, and Work (Sweet Toil) are held up as the ideals of life, never to be abandoned. It is safe to include in the word Friendship the love of wife and children, for Schiller's family life was most happy and presents a rare picture of unselfish enjoyment and peace.

Death found him in the midst of "sweet toil." The fragment of another great tragedy, "Demetrius," dealing with the story of the failure of the Russian pretender Dmitri at the beginning of the seventeenth century, adds another testimony to the wide range of his poetical genius. The complex character of Demetrius is very different from the tragic heroes of Schiller's other dramas. The soliloquy of Marfa, the widowed queen, was found on Schiller's desk after his death. It contains these lines (which certainly show no decrease of power):

"O, wherefore stand I here in fetters bound,  
Helpless, whilst endless passion stirs my soul?  
O sun immortal, round this earthly globe  
Driving thy daily course, bear thou my words!  
O breeze, that blowest where thou listest, free,  
An instant messenger to furthest goal,  
O bear my warmth of longing to his heart!  
Naught have I but my prayer and my complaint,  
Springing like flame from out my bosom's depth,  
With trust in God I turn them unto heaven."

Goethe's poem on Schiller's death, written a few months later, and, in altered form, recited after "The Song of the Bell" in the Weimar theater in 1815, is a beautiful tribute. Even those who never read the poem as a whole are familiar with "the two great lines in which," as Schiller's biographer, Henry W. Nevinson, says, "more fitly than in any other possible words the secret of Schiller's power as a man and a poet is set forth":

"Behind him, like an empty show, remained  
The Commonplace that holds us all enthralled."

## “WILHELM TELL,” THE DRAMA OF FREEDOM

1804

The theme of Schiller’s “Wilhelm Tell” is the revolt of the three Forest Cantons of Switzerland, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden, against the oppressions of the house of Hapsburg. The political situation as conceived by the author is briefly this: Albert I, Duke of Hapsburg (Austria), Emperor of Germany, in violation of their ancient charters, had sent viceroys into the cantons. Beringer von Landenberg, as viceroy of Unterwalden, had his seat at the castle of Sarnen, and Hermann Gessler, as viceroy of Uri and Schwyz, at Küssnacht. Both of these viceroys and their bailiffs oppressed the people. The cantons had sent delegates to the emperor, but these had been refused audience, while, at the same time, they were clearly given to understand that the cantons had only to swear allegiance to Austria in order to obtain his favor.

It must be borne in mind that the emperor was not such by hereditary right, but by election. Consequently Albert, who had large private possessions in Switzerland, wished to detach the powerful Forest Cantons from the German empire and attach them to his own possessions, thus making them hereditary fiefs of the house of Hapsburg. In addition to this injustice, he was withholding from his nephew, Duke John of Suabia, his lawful patrimony.

The yeomen remained firm in their allegiance to the empire, but the nobles, with one exception—the old Baron von Attinghausen—sided with Austria. For the best understanding of the play the hero should be conceived to

be the whole Swiss people, their struggle for the maintenance of their ancient rights and privileges as a free people being the dramatic action. Viewed in this light the main action naturally divides into three minor ones, which are united in the catastrophe:

First, the action of Wilhelm Tell, to whose individual daring the final victory is mainly due. This action has its climax in the scene of the apple-shooting—Act III, scene 5.

Second, the action of the yeomen, among whom Werner Stauffacher of Schwyz, Walther Fürst (father-in-law of Tell) of Uri, and Arnold von Melchthal of Unterwalden, may be taken as representative men of their respective cantons. This action has its climax in the confederation on the Rütli—Act II, scene 2.

Third, the action of the loyal Swiss nobility, of which the old Baron von Attinghausen is the representative. This action has its climax in the death of Attinghausen and the subsequent identification of his nephew, Rudenz, with the confederation—Act. IV, scene 2.

The action begins in the afternoon of the 28th of October, and covers not over a month, although, were the true historical date of the assassination of the emperor taken into account, it would extend to May 1 or a few days later.

The overture sung by the fisher-boy, the herdsman, and the hunter (types of the three chief occupations of the land) is admirably calculated to give the proper local coloring. The scene represents a bay of the lake of Luzerne, opposite Schwyz; a fisherman's cottage is near the shore. Beyond the lake are green mountains, and right and left tower the Alps. Tinkling cow-bells are heard, while the

fisher-boy rowing on the lake sings to the melody of the *Ranz des vaches*:

“The clear smiling lake wooed to bathe in its deep,  
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;  
Then heard he a melody  
Flowing and soft,  
And sweet, as when angels  
Are singing aloft.

And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,  
The waters are murmuring over his breast;  
And a voice from the deep cries,  
‘With me thou must go,  
I charm the young shepherd,  
I lure him below.’ ”

The herdsman from the mountains takes up the song:

“Farewell, ye green meadows,  
Farewell, sunny shore,  
The herdsman must leave you,  
The summer is o’er.

We go to the hills, but you’ll see us again,  
When the cuckoo is calling, and wood-notes are gay,  
When flowerets are blooming in dingle and plain,  
And brooks sparkle up in the sunshine of May.  
Farewell, ye green meadows,  
Farewell, sunny shore,  
The herdsman must leave you,  
The summer is o’er.”

The chamois-hunter from the opposite cliff sings the second variation:

“On the heights peal the thunder, and trembles the bridge,  
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge,  
Undaunted he hies him  
O’er ice-covered wild,  
Where leaf never budded,  
Nor spring ever smiled;

And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye  
No longer the dwellings of man can espy;  
Through the parting clouds only  
    The earth can be seen,  
    Far down 'neath the vapor  
    The meadows of green."

At the close of the song a change comes across the landscape. The rumbling of thunder is heard and cloud shadows sweep across the lake. All gather about the fisherman's cottage, where hurried preparations for the coming storm are interrupted by the entrance of Conrad Baumgarten from Alzellen, who rushes up breathless and begs to be set across the lake. He has killed Wolfenschiesse, the governor's bailiff, for attempting to dishonor his wife. The ferryman is afraid to try the passage, for in addition to the storm, which is now in full force, it is St. Simon's and St. Jude's day (October 28), when, according to popular belief, the lake must have its victim. At this point Tell appears, and after endeavoring in vain to induce the ferryman to venture, he addresses to the herdsman the words,

"Console my wife, should aught of ill befall me.  
I do but what I may not leave undone,"

leaps into the boat, and rescues Baumgarten from his pursuers, who destroy the herds and the fisherman's hut.

In the second scene Werner Stauffacher is sitting pensively before his new house on the public road near a bridge at Steinen in Schwyz, the opposite side of the lake. His wife, Gertrude, one of the broad-minded heroic women of the cantons, enters. She inquires into the cause of her husband's sadness, at a time when the barns are full, their herds safely home from the mountain pas-

tures, and their house standing there, "No nobleman's more fair." Her husband informs her of Gessler's visit the day before. Surprised and angry at the sight of the new house, the viceroy had declared that he would put a stop to the proud bearing of the peasant who dared build houses at his own pleasure. Gertrude, assuring her husband that Gessler's menace was prompted by envy, and that the governor will leave no means untried to compass their destruction, bids him like a wise man to anticipate the blow:

"Then it were well that some of you—true men—  
Men sound at heart, should secretly devise  
How best to shake this hateful thraldom off.  
Well do I know that God would not desert you,  
But lend his favor to the righteous cause.  
Hast thou no friend in Uri, say, to whom  
Thou frankly may'st unbosom all thy thoughts?"

Her husband frankly admits that these words voice his own secret musings, but begs her to consider that what she counsels is war, "a horrid, ruthless fiend that strikes at once the shepherd and his flock."

*Gertrud.* Whate'er great heaven inflicts we must endure;  
No heart of noble temper brooks injustice.

*Stauffacher.* This house—thy pride—war, unrelenting war,  
Will burn it down.

*Gertrud.* And did I think this heart  
Enslaved and fettered to the things of earth,  
With my own hand I'd hurl the kindling torch.

*Stauffacher.* Thou hast faith in human kindness, wife;  
but war  
Spares not the tender infant in its cradle.

*Gertrud.* There is a friend to innocence in heaven!  
Look forward, Werner, not behind you, now!

*Stauffacher.* We men may perish bravely, sword in hand;

But oh, what fate, my Gertrude, may be thine?

*Gertrud.* None are so weak, but one last choice is left,  
A spring from yonder bridge, and I am free!

*Stauffacher* [*embracing her*]. Well may he fight for hearth  
and home that clasps  
A heart so rare as thine against his own!  
What are the hosts of emperors to him!

He decides to go at once to Uri to consult with his old friend, Walther Fürst and the noble Banneret of Attinghausen, who, although of noble blood, loves the people and honors the old customs. As they go away Tell enters with Baumgarten, whom he is conducting to the shelter of Stauffacher's house.

The following scene represents a castle at Altdorf in process of erection by the forced labor of the men whom this stronghold is intended to subjugate. While Stauffacher and Tell are looking at the work, a crier comes in with the ducal hat of Austria, and announces that by the viceroy's edict, all will be required to do reverence to this hat, which is about to be placed on a pole at Altdorf. Stauffacher urges Tell to go with him, but Tell is of the opinion that it is better to bear in silence, as "Impetuous rulers have the shortest reigns." The conversation before they separate gives the keynote to Tell's character:

*Stauffacher.* Much might be done—did we stand fast together.

*Tell.* When the ship founders, he will best escape  
Who seeks no other's safety but his own.

*Stauffacher.* And you desert the common cause so coldly?

*Tell.* A man can safely count but on himself!

*Stauffacher.* Nay, even the weak grow strong by union.

*Tell.* But the strong man is the strongest when alone.

*Stauffacher.* Your country, then, cannot rely on you,  
If in despair she rise against her foes.

*Tell.* Tell rescues the lost sheep from yawning gulfs:  
Is he a man, then, to desert his friends?  
Yet, whatsoe'er you do, spare me from council!  
I was not born to ponder and select;  
But when your course of action is resolved,  
Then call on Tell; you shall not find him fail.

After their departure Bertha von Bruneck appears on the scene, imploring help for a poor workman who has fallen from the scaffolding.—When Stauffacher knocks at the door of Walther Fürst in Altdorf (scene 4), Arnold von Melchthal, a refugee from Unterwalden (he had resisted the viceroy's servant sent to drive away his oxen from the plow), retires into an adjoining room. Stauffacher relates to Fürst that the viceroy has visited his vengeance on Melchthal's aged father, whom he has blinded after robbing him of all his possessions. Rushing forth from his concealment, Melchthal demands if this be true beyond a doubt, and on being assured that his father is hopelessly blind, breaks forth in language which, although criticized as out of place in the mouth of a simple peasant, is of remarkable force and beauty (probably the best poetical treatment of the subject in literature):

“O the eye’s light, of all the gifts of heaven,  
The dearest, best! From light all beings live—  
Each fair created thing—the very plants  
Turn with a joyful transport to the light,  
And he—he must drag on through all his days  
In endless darkness! Never more for him  
The sunny meads shall glow, the flowerets bloom;  
Nor shall he more behold the roseate tints  
Of the iced mountain top! To die is nothing,  
But to have life, and not have sight—oh, that  
Is misery indeed! Why do you look

So piteously at me? I have two eyes,  
Yet to my poor blind father can give neither!  
No, not one gleam of that great sea of light,  
That with its dazzling splendor floods my gaze."

They plan to rouse the inhabitants of their respective cantons, and to meet, each with ten picked men, on the Rütli meadow, on the left bank of the lake right against the Mythenstein (the stone which now bears the Schiller monument).

The second act opens in the ancestral hall of the baron of Attinghausen. The baron, an old man of eighty-five, is surrounded by his peasants with rakes and scythes about to go to their daily work. His nephew, Ulrich von Rudenz, enters in purple mantle and peacock-plumed hat, the costume of an Austrian knight. The aged nobleman, after having drunken the morning-cup in true patriarchal fashion with his servants, dismisses them with these words:

"Go, children, and at eve when work is done,  
We'll meet to talk the country's business over."

Left alone with his nephew, he tries to dissuade him from going to the castle of Altdorf by appealing to his love for his native land. He argues that Bertha von Bruneck, whose love Rudenz hopes to win by his service for the emperor, is only held out before him as a lure. Rudenz will not listen, and the old man is left alone.

The Meeting on the Rütli—Act II, scene 2: Melchthal appears first with his ten men, among whom is Baumgarten; then Stauffacher with his men; and last, Walther Fürst with his men, among whom are the pastor Rösselmann, the herdsman, the fisher and the hunter of the first scene. There are thirty-three men in all (bearing names

taken from the old chronicle of Tschudi). At the instance of the pastor they hold the old diet around swords set upright in the ground in accordance with ancient custom. Stauffacher tells the old legend of their common descent. Affirming their rights as free men to the soil, which is theirs by a thousand years' possession, he asks:

“ . . . And shall an alien lord,  
Himself a vassal, dare to venture here,  
On our own hearths insult us, and attempt  
To forge the chains of bondage for our hands,  
And do us shame on our own proper soil?  
Is there no help against such wrong as this?

*[Great sensation among the people.]*

Yes! there's a limit to the despot's power!  
When the oppressed looks round in vain for justice,  
When his sore burden may no more be borne,  
With fearless heart he makes appeal to heaven,  
And thence brings down his everlasting rights,  
Which there abide, inalienably his,  
And indestructible as are the stars.  
Nature's primeval state returns again,  
Where man stands hostile to his fellowman;  
And if all other means shall fail his need,  
One last resource remains—his own good sword.  
Our dearest treasures call to us for aid  
Against the oppressor's violence; we stand  
For country, home, for wives, for children here!”

All (clashing their swords) answer:

“Here stand we for our homes, our wives, and children.”

After long discussion it is decided, since the strongholds must fall first of all, to delay their uprising until Christmas, because at Christmas-time it was the custom of the serfs to carry presents to the viceroy. In this way it would be easy to introduce armed men into the castle of

Sarnen. Melchthal offers to scale the walls of Rossburg. He has a sweetheart there on whom he can depend to let down a rope ladder. As the dawn draws near, Rösselmann administers the following oath:

"By this fair light, which greeteth, us before  
Those other nations, that, beneath us far,  
In noisome cities pent, draw painful breath,  
Swear we the oath of our confederacy!  
We swear to be a nation of true brothers,  
Never to part in danger or in death!"

[*They repeat his words with three fingers raised.*]

"We swear we will be free, as were our sires,  
And sooner die than live in slavery!

[*All repeat as before.*]

We swear to put our trust in God Most High,  
And not to quail before the might of man!"

[*All repeat as before and embrace each other.*]

In deep silence they go away in three different directions as the rays of the rising sun tint the peaks of the glaciers.

Act third opens at Bürglen in the court before Tell's house. Tell is busy mending a door. His boys Walther and Wilhelm are playing with a cross-bow; Walther sings a hunting song. Hedwig, Tell's wife, who is the counterpart of Gertrude Stauffacher and may be considered as representing the domestic Swiss housewife, is occupied with household cares. She has heard of the meeting on the Rütli, and although her husband was not present, her soul is full of foreboding. On him, as always, the heaviest burden will fall; ever ready to help others no one will help him. When her husband makes ready to go to Alt-dorf she beseeches him to delay until the viceroy has left. But Tell replies: "Dear wife, I gave my promise I would

go,"' and takes with him Walther who wishes to visit his grandfather.

In the second scene Bertha and Rudenz, who have become separated from the rest of the hunting party, meet in a secluded dell. Rudenz declares his love, but Bertha, secretly a loyal daughter of the cantons, answers that she would sooner wed the tyrant Gessler than give her hand to the Swiss, who forgetting his birth, becomes a tyrant's minion. Rudenz now declares that his thirst for the glory of knighthood was due to his love for her. She answers as the hunting horns are drawing nearer:

"Fight for thy land; thou fightest for thy love.  
One foe fills all our hearts with dread; the blow  
Which makes one free emancipates us all."

The third scene of this act is the climax of the Tell action. The story of the apple-shooting is too well known to require much comment. Into this scene Schiller skilfully introduces not only the main actors, but all the central figures of the play: Fürst, who offers bail for his son-in-law; Melchthal, who wishes to resort at once to open resistance; the more cautious Stauffacher, who urges the uselessness of attempting force when they are unarmed; Rösselmann, the pastor; Bertha, who strives to move Gessler to pity; and Rudenz, who places himself openly on his countrymen's side. At the conclusion Tell, having explained the purpose of the second arrow, is taken away bound in the viceroy's boat to be imprisoned, "where neither sun nor moon can reach him," in the vaults at Küssnacht.

Act four opens on the eastern shore of the lake, opposite the locality of the first scene of the play. Again a heavy storm is on the lake. A fisherman and his son, the

ferryman and the fisher-boy of the opening scene, whom we may suppose to live on this side of the lake since the destruction of their cottage on the west shore by the viceroy's horsemen, are conversing with a friend who was an eye-witness of the apple-shooting. From him they learn that Tell is a prisoner and that the old Baron von Attinghausen is dying. As the storm rages the fisherman expresses his emotions in words which recall King Lear's famous apostrophe:

“Rage on, ye winds! Ye lightnings, flash your fires!  
Burst, ye swollen clouds! Ye cataracts of heaven,  
Descend, and drown the country! In the germ,  
Destroy the generations yet unborn!  
Ye savage elements, be lords of all!  
Return, ye bears; ye ancient wolves, return  
To this wide, howling waste! The land is yours.  
Who would live here when liberty is gone?”

From this point, which marks what may be called the tragic crisis, the descending action begins. Bells are heard, and the boy who has climbed the rocks calls out that a ship, which he recognizes as the viceroy's by its red roof, is in distress. They watch it pass the rocky promontory of the great Axenberg. Soon afterwards Wilhelm Tell enters with his cross-bow. He is violently agitated. He throws himself upon his knees and stretches his hands toward heaven. With great vividness he narrates his story from the time of his seizure to his daring leap, and requests the fisherman whom he knows to have been among the Rütli men, to take the news of his deliverance to Hedwig, his wife:

“Bid them be resolute, and strong of heart—  
For Tell is free and master of his arm;  
They shall hear further news of me ere long.”

With these significant words, he leaves to take the nearest road to Küssnacht.

In the second scene we return to the baronial hall of Attinghausen. Walther Fürst, Stauffacher, Melchthal, Baumgarten, Walther, Tell's son, and later Hedwig, Tell's wife, are with the dying man. Fürst acquaints him with the confederation on the Rütli, and with the glad fact that Rudenz has spoken out like a man for his countrymen. The baron dies blessing the head on which the apple lay, while with prophetic vision he foretells the victory of the cantons. Rudenz, who has been sent for, arrives. On his uncle's dead hand he abjures all foreign ties and consecrates himself to his country's cause. He knows of the Rütli confederation, but urges an immediate attack upon the strongholds. As he supposes, Tell has already fallen a sacrifice to their delay; besides this, he has his own private cause to settle with the tyrants, for Bertha von Bruneck has been carried off by stealth. Melchthal, the last to be convinced of the sincerity of his changed attitude, now welcomes Rudenz as leader. By his words, two actions—the action of the yeomen and that of the nobles—are merged into one, and the necessity for an immediate attack acknowledged:

“Come, lead us on! We follow! Why defer  
Until to-morrow what to-day may do?  
Tell's arm was free when we at Rütli swore,  
This foul enormity was yet undone.  
And change of circumstance brings change of law.  
Who such a coward as to waver still?”

The third scene is near Gessler's castle at Küssnacht, in a narrow pass which slopes down between the cliffs. Wilhelm Tell, with his cross-bow, appears upon one of

the rocks (the traditional spot is now marked by a memorial chapel). The famous monologue beginning,

"Here through this deep defile he needs must pass;  
There leads no other road to Küssnacht,"

gives a clear picture of Tell's mind. He has no doubt as to the righteousness of the deed. The death of Gessler is a sacred debt which he must pay. His action here is in perfect accord with his character as shown in preceding scenes: Before setting Baumgarten over the lake he had endeavored to persuade the ferryman to do his duty, but when it was for him to act there was no hesitancy; having counseled non-resistance, he now, since the measure of iniquity is full, with the same determination, takes his cross-bow to make his master shot in defense of wife, children, and native land. The scene is managed with great artistic skill. In striking contrast with the anticipated deed, a gay bridal party enters the pass just in advance of the viceroy. To prevent any possible sympathy for the tyrant he is made to fall at the very moment of another transgression of the laws of humanity. A poor woman has just thrown herself with her children before his horse, imploring mercy for her husband, who has lain in prison six months without trial. Gessler orders her to be dragged away:

"Too mild a ruler am I to this people,  
Their tongues are all too bold; nor have they yet  
Been tamed to due submission, as they shall be.  
I must take order for the remedy;  
I will subdue this stubborn mood of theirs,  
And crush the soul of liberty within them.  
I'll publish a new law throughout the land; I will—  
[An arrow pierces him, he puts his hand on his heart, and is  
about to sink, with a feeble voice.]  
Oh, God, have mercy on my soul!"

As he dies Tell appears on the rocks overhead, acknowledging the deed.

In the opening scene of the last act, signal fires on the mountains proclaim the success of the confederation. Keep Uri, still unfinished, is seen in the background. Melchthal, who enters with Baumgarten, demands why the fortress is still standing when Sarnen and Rossburg lie in ashes. Walther Fürst, who is present, inquires if they have freed the country from the foe. Melchthal describes the storming of the strongholds and the rescue of Bertha from amid the ruins. Children come in bearing the cap of Austria upon a pole. Fürst counsels its preservation as a lasting symbol of their freedom. Stauffacher and Rösselmann appear upon the scene announcing the assassination of the emperor by his nephew, Duke John of Suabia. This news is supplemented by an imperial messenger, who bears a letter from the widowed queen, Elizabeth, asking the assistance of the cantons in avenging the murder of her husband. All agree that, while it does not become them to triumph in his fall, they are not called upon to avenge the death of a sovereign who never did them good. In conclusion Stauffacher exclaims:

“But where is Tell? Shall he, our freedom’s founder,  
Alone be absent from our festival?  
He did the most—endured the worst of all.  
Come—to his dwelling let us all repair,  
And bid the savior of our country hail!”

The second scene is the interior of Tell’s cottage. Hedwig and her sons are rejoicing in the near return of Tell. Duke John of Suabia, the parricide, approaches disguised as a monk. Hedwig welcomes her husband with the characteristic words:

"Oh, Tell, what have I suffered for thy sake!"

while his son Wilhelm inquires for the cross-bow. Tell replies:

"It is suspended in a holy place,  
And in the chase shall ne'er be used again."

The monk reveals his identity, but Tell will allow no comparison of his own righteous deed with the murder of the emperor. He bids Duke John to go to Rome, cast himself at the feet of the pope, confess his guilt and ease his laden soul.

The final scene, which ties the different threads together, is in the valley before Tell's house. Groups of peasants are seen on the heights around. Walther Fürst, with the two boys, Werner and Stauffacher, come forward. As Tell appears all receive him with the joyful cry:

"Long live brave Tell our shield, our liberator."

While those in front crowd around Tell, Bertha and Rudenz enter. As the music ceases Bertha steps into the center of the group.

*Bertha.* Peasants! Confederates! Into your league  
Receive me here that happily am the first  
To find protection in the land of freedom.  
To your brave hands I now intrust my rights.  
Will you protect me as your citizen?

*Peasants.* Ay, that we will with life and fortune both!

*Bertha.* 'Tis well! And to this youth I give my hand.  
A free Swiss maiden to a free Swiss man!

*Rudenz.* And from this moment all my serfs are free!

The different dramas of Schiller testify to the astonishing many-sidedness of his poetical genius. There may be some controversy whether his last drama, "Wilhelm Tell," is his best. There can be no doubt that it is the

most popular of his dramatic masterpieces. Owing to its fervent advocacy of political freedom—to which all nations aspire—it is of all his dramas the best known in other countries. To the American college student it is usually a source of inspiration. Witnessing the revolt of a brave people against foreign oppression, he is reminded of the great conflict of his own country. Schiller has been named the poet of freedom. Certainly moral and intellectual liberty of the individual, or of the nation, or of the race, is the ideal goal or central interest in all his writings, prose or poetry. It is the keynote to the understanding and appreciation of Schiller's life and works, among which "*Wilhelm Tell*" is the pure and perfect representative of his ideal.





HEINRICH HEINE

## CHAPTER VIII

HEINE: "THE BOOK OF SONGS"

1797-1856

In his songs there is music for all.—*William Sharp, "Life of Heine," p. 14.*

Heine's enemies—and there are many—are as bitter in their accusations as his friends are warm in his praise. Without attempting to explain the complexity of his character, and holding aloof from censure and eulogy, the subsequent observations purport to elucidate what is best in Heine, what is his real and undoubted contribution to German literature and to the world of song. The poet's own memoirs and letters furnish an abundance of material for an outline of his life and works. This, his own conception and interpretation of himself, is reflected, often in his own words, in the following record.

"As to the time of my birth, I will state that according to my certificate of baptism, I was born on the 13th of December, 1799, and certainly at Düsseldorf on the Rhine." In this statement of Heinrich Heine the year 1799 has to be changed to 1797. The date, the 13th of December, is correct; not the 31st (elsewhere given by Heine), which, coupled with the year 1800 or 1801, had gained validity by his calling himself in jest the first man of the century, and by utterances like the one in which he proclaims that around his cradle played the last rays of

the moonlight of the eighteenth and the first rosy dawn of the nineteenth century. His native city, Düsseldorf, had about sixteen thousand inhabitants. It was, during the years of Heine's childhood, full of Frenchmen and French ideas, a fact which is not without significance. The town was very pretty; "to any one who thinks of it from a distance and happens to have been born there, it appears wonderfully attractive."

Heine's parents were Jews. His father had come to Düsseldorf as a stranger; he was a merchant, a very silent and handsome man. At the beginning of the French Revolution he was one of the followers of Prince Ernest of Cumberland, serving in the campaign of Flanders and Brabant with him as commissary. He liked soldiering, or rather the gay idle life where "the gold and scarlet outside hides the emptiness within," being delighted when as an officer of the Burgher's Guard he could wear the beautiful blue uniform. When his turn as commanding officer came, wine flowed freely. But it was not the wine alone that made him popular. He was readily induced to play, and to play high; he was a protector of dramatic art, or rather of its priestesses. Horses and hounds were his passion. His irreverent son, Heinrich, who loved him dearly, tells all this, and adds that the leading trait in his father's disposition was an exuberant love of life, that in his breast it was always holiday. Certainly the poet had much in common with this man, "forgetting yesterday and careless of to-morrow." From him rather than from his well-educated mother (who while a mere girl read to her father Latin dissertations and other learned writings), he inherited his taste for the fantastic and romantic. He was, however, not less indebted to

her. Though she disapproved of poetry and did all in her power to keep her son from such vagaries, she not only directed his studies, but furnished him with means for pursuing them by selling some valuable jewels to provide for his support at the university. Heine tells us that she never pretended to control his opinions, being all indulgence and love, but when he adds that she was a follower of Rousseau, and that her faith was an uncompromising deism, we are inclined to believe that without any apprehensible efforts on her part, his susceptible and alert young mind was tinged with her prevailing hue of thought.

Besides his mother, some credit for directing his education is to be given to his uncle, Simon de Geldern, a comfortable-looking little man with a "palish strong face" and a nose of Grecian outline, "a third longer than the Greeks usually wore their noses." He had studied at the Jesuits' College, was a sort of a bibliomaniac, and wrote and thought, "though with much labor." This uncle, the poet thinks, may have awakened in his breast the love of literary pursuits. He not only gave the boy free access to his library, but presented him with fine and costly books. It was in the attic room of his house that Heine found among medical and philosophical pamphlets a notebook of a great-uncle, whose name was also Simon de Geldern. This former owner of the name was a hard riddle to read. Because of his travels in the East and the rich Oriental costume which he always wore, he had been nicknamed the Orientalist, and at times the Chevalier, the latter, maybe, on account of some gallant adventures. Did the poet see himself when he describes this rare character as half a dreamer engaged in the propaganda of

improvement and half a free lance bursting through or leaping over the rotten barriers of a rotten society?

It would be hard to trace the whole debt that Heine owed to his ancestors. There is, however, one member of his family who is largely responsible for molding the events of his life and, indirectly, his character. His father's elder brother, Solomon Heine, was a man of generous and benevolent disposition, though somewhat tyrannical. What the Hamburg uncle liked in his nephew was the quality of mind that he himself possessed in no small degree—his wit. For poetry, or for the desire to write poetry, the rich business man had no understanding. Mistaking Heine's rare power of perceiving analogies between things which have nothing in common, he tried to lead the clever and wide-awake young man into the paths which he had trod. The lamentable failure of this attempt to establish the poet in business did not, however, restrain the uncle from granting him the necessary means for a university career. Until his death Solomon Heine most liberally supported or assisted the poet, to whom these gifts became indispensable. The possible gain in literary leisure caused by this not always graciously given aid, was counterbalanced by the loss of manly independence incurred by Heine's acceptance of this prolonged charity. Whoever understands the hard conditions of German life will be apt to condone or overlook this weakness, but it must be admitted that the family quarrel after Solomon's death concerning Heinrich Heine's claims to support does not make the poet appear as a man of proud reserve and moral dignity.

As to his early training, too much has been made of the first reading that fell into the hands of the boy: "The

Life and Adventures of the Ingenious Knight Don Quixote, de la Mancha," by Miguel de Cervantes. In his later brilliant criticism of the book he remembers the bitter tears he wept when the worthy knight gained nothing but ridicule and blows for his magnanimous deeds. This childish good faith was not of long duration. More lasting was the spell that Uhland's poetry exercised over his boyish imagination. When he relates how often he sat among the ruins of the castle of Düsseldorf on the Rhine, repeating to himself one of Uhland's sweetest songs about the lady looking down from the battlements, and the fair young shepherd, we are forcibly reminded of some of Heine's own songs. The impressions that Heine gives of his schooling are not very different from those of most German boys. They will heartily applaud his mocking remarks about the kings of Rome, dates, the Latin irregular nouns and verbs, about Greek, Hebrew, geography, German grammar, and mental arithmetic. Many a youth before and after Heine has envied the Romans "who had not to learn Latin," or condemned Greek as "an invention of the devil," or found that the German language is "no child's play." He probably enjoyed better the lectures in the first class of the Düsseldorf Lyceum, in which the Catholic rector, Schallmeyer, explained the system of Greek free thought, and this without reserve, however much at variance with the orthodox dogmas "as whose priest he used to officiate at the altar in full canonicals." If the French lessons cost him many a scolding, young Henry, or Harry—in compliment to one of his best friends in England Heine's father had anglicized his name—liked, no doubt, the practical instruction in this language by M. Le Grand, the French drum-major quar-

tered on his family, who had "the face of a devil and the heart of an angel." M. Le Grand's accounts of the great emperor's feats of battle awakened in Heine the love and admiration for Napoleon, to which he gave so wonderful expression in one of his earliest and best known poems, "*The Grenadiers*," almost simultaneous with the "*Dream Pictures*," reflecting the touching romance of his first love, the "*pale Josepha*." It must not be forgotten that in the "*lycée*," the school which Heine attended, the teacher of French, a French emigrant, was the only instructor in German history, that during the most impressionable years of his boyhood Heine was a French subject, and that his mother's first plan was to prepare him for the French civil service. After Napoleon's downfall this ambitious scheme lost its charm.

In 1815 Heinrich entered upon a business life, being placed in a bank, and then in the warehouse of a wholesale grocer at Frankfort-on-the-Main. The first of these employments lasted three weeks, and the latter four, during which time Heine humorously claims to have learned how bills of exchange are drawn and how nutmegs look. His later commercial activity in Hamburg, under the guidance of his rich uncle, has been mentioned. To the years of this unsuccessful mercantile career is most likely to be traced the beginning of his still more tragic love for Solomon Heine's beautiful daughter Amalie. What in Frankfort could not fail to leave a lasting impression upon his mind, was the restricted and humiliating life of the ghetto, where the Jews were compelled to live. His personal experiences and observations here could certainly not increase his patriotism. In 1819 Heine entered the University of Bonn to study law, in conformity with the

wishes of his Hamburg uncle. A description of his personnel as a student given by his niece, the Princess Della Rocca, is interesting because it shows how much at this time the poet resembled in his exterior the other members of his family as described by his own pen. She speaks of his noble appearance (Heine speaks about his great-uncle's "stately presence"), of his feminine sweetness (Heine refers to his father's "almost feminine" beauty), of his Greek nose (Heine attributes this Hebrew peculiarity to his uncle, Simon de Geldern), of his small and white hands (Heine calls his father's hand elegant, well formed, and marble-white). The additional remark of the princess, that he dressed with exquisite taste, calls to mind his father's splendid uniform and his great-uncle's Oriental robe. Heine lived the life of a German student. There is no especial record of his having been greatly pleased with or benefited by his stay at the university. His chief interest lay in German history and literature. His closer acquaintance with A. W. Schlegel was probably the best result obtained from his studies in Bonn. The courses offered by this leader of the Romantic School widened his general culture, and gave him some special training in the rules of his art.

At the close of his second semester, changing universities (as students in Germany usually do if circumstances allow it), Heine went to Göttingen. How this city, "famous for its sausages and its university," impressed him, may be judged from a later description of its inhabitants, whom he divides into students, professors, philistines, and cattle, adding that these four classes are by no means sharply defined. He thinks he ought to have stayed in Bonn, and confesses to being horribly bored by

the odious and stiff tone. You can do nothing but grind, he writes; the additional statement that he had come for this purpose must be taken *cum grano salis*. He was not yet ready to buckle down to hard work in his professional study. After a quarrel with another student he was sent off for half a year on account of disobedience to the law concerning dueling. The next year we find him in Berlin. At this newly established university he was introduced to the best scholars of his time, among them the founder of comparative philology, Bopp, and the great theologian, Schleiermacher. Socially he met these men in the salon of Rahel Levin, the wife of the Councilor of Legation Varnhagen von Ense. Chamisso and Fouqué and other men of literary distinction belonged also to the circle which gathered at the house of the brilliant Jewess. Probably more than by any of these his way of thinking was affected through Schopenhauer, whose pessimistic philosophy was destined to have so profound an influence on German thought, and above all by Hegel, whose exalted individualism struck a corresponding chord in Heine's nature, although the poet affirms that he seldom understood him and only contrived to comprehend him by subsequent reflection. Important for the form of his verse is the cordial relation established here between him and the noted singer of Grecian songs, Wilhelm Müller, who showed him first the possibility of "adding new forms to those of the national folk-song." It was likewise during his stay in the Prussian capital that his first collection of poems appeared, followed by the two tragedies "Ratcliff" and "Almansor," and the "Lyrical Intermezzo."

The feverish life of Berlin society was thoroughly to his liking, though it may have had some share in under-

mining his health, and in causing those nervous headaches from which he so often suffered during the rest of his life. As early as in April, 1823, he writes: "The great thing is the restoration of my health, without which all plans are folly. If God will give me good health, I will look out for the rest myself." Returning to Göttingen in 1824, he began the study of jurisprudence in earnest, and on the 25th of July of the following year he was made Doctor of Laws. A short time before receiving the degree he had been baptized into the Lutheran Church. He never became practitioner of law, nor did his baptism convert him into a Christian. His attitude was always hostile toward any set of religious doctrines subscribed to by a congregation of people; his very nature rebelled against any assertion resembling a creed. The positive and constructive elements in Heine's mental attitude never asserted themselves as such, they were outweighed by the negative and destructive spirit which controlled his mind. Even his fight for the rehabilitation of matter, for the emancipation of the flesh, was in reality nothing but an attack upon all forms of asceticism, and upon the spirit of humble submission to the social code and environment. From this source arose the spirit of mockery and vulgarity (not entirely foreign to the folk-song) which, breaking suddenly forth in the closing lines of a poem, mars its beauty as a hideous sore or a vulgar line disfigures an otherwise perfect face. To this second sojourn in Göttingen we owe his finest prose work, the inimitable "*Hartz Trip*," describing a walking tour undertaken the autumn before his advancement to the doctorate. The six succeeding years (1825-1831) might be characterized as years of travel and wandering. He lived the life of

a journalist in Hamburg, on the islands of Helgoland and Norderney, in England, in the city of Munich, and in Italy. His various trips are narrated in his "Pictures of Travel." The enormous sale of this book might have insured an independent fortune to its author, but Heine's lack of business sense made his publisher, Julius Campe, a rich man, while he remained dependent upon his uncle. What grieved him still more, was the suppression of passages in his writings. He tells Campe in one of his letters that he would have him painted in a night-cap of proof-sheets upon which every bold word is crossed out in red. When, on account of his free speech and liberal views, Heine's friends failed in securing for him a university professorship, he despaired of achieving a position in Germany, and resolved on expatriation.

In May, 1831, Heine entered his adopted country and the city of Paris, in which he was to spend the remainder of his life. Isolated in a great city, away from kith and kin and the land of his birth, to which he only returned for one brief visit, his writings after 1835 having been forbidden by the federal diet, Heine felt himself a martyr. But whatever expression he gives to this sentiment (every man living in an alien land is subject to moments of depression, in which he feels a stranger among strangers), Heine's chameleon temperament and cosmopolitan character were well suited in Paris. "If any one asks how I am," he writes to a friend, "say, 'Like a fish in water,' or, rather say, 'When a fish in the sea asks another fish how he is, the reply is, like Heine in Paris.' " Leading celebrities, authors, musicians, diplomats, gave him a cordial welcome. His genius was admired by the French, who pronounced him the wittiest man in France since

Voltaire; and his existence was made fairly comfortable by the pension from his family in Hamburg, and by an annuity from the French government. It was for the French that he wrote his essay on the Romantic School, and it was in answer to a proposal of the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that he wrote the series of admirable articles on the intellectual development of his native land, the "History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany." Of the poetical works that he wrote in Paris "Atta Troll" and "Germany: A Winter's Tale" (an account of the author's journey from the German frontier to Hamburg) are keen and spirited criticisms of life and literature, and justify to some extent his claims to having been a true-hearted soldier in the War of Liberation of Humanity. In spite, however, of their fine satire and "streaks of virgin gold," they cannot be regarded as German classics. In these poems, as in his controversial writings against Count Platen, and his former friend Börne, his brilliant and fearless wit is impaired by a certain mannerism and recklessness foreign to his earlier muse.

Heine feared that his periodical headaches, which lasted for weeks and months, would result in some mental disturbance. His ceaseless suffering, which extended over more than twelve years, began with a paralytic shock in 1844, caused by his cousin's refusal after Uncle Solomon's death to continue the pension. An eye trouble dimming his sight (and finally robbing him of the use of his right eye), aggravated the disease which steadily progressed. Four years later he took his last walk. After that he remained on his mattress grave, as he called his sick-bed, lying on his lame back, "in which horrible cramps run riot,"

until released by death, in 1856. In a final judgment of Heine's character there ought not to be overlooked his sincere and tender love for his wife, a former Parisian shop-girl, Eugenie Mirat, who nursed him during his sickness, and his uninterrupted passionate affection for his mother, who never knew about his real condition of health, because she received from him only the most cheerful letters.

Heine's mind remained clear to the end. When he barely had strength to raise and guide the pencil, and while under the stress of severe pain, he wrote some of his best songs, not less entitled to immortality than those incorporated in "*The Book of Songs*," and filled with the same overflowing spirit of love and life.

"THE BOOK OF SONGS"

1827

"The Book of Songs" (more accurately "The Book of the Songs") is one of the world's classics. It was published in 1827. Accepting the year 1797 as the year of his birth, Heine was in his thirtieth year when he gave to the world this collection of songs, which may be considered the poetical record of the principal events of the first half of his life. What adorns "The Book of Songs" with the unity of a work of art is its systematic arrangement and inner completeness. Its four divisions represent in chronological order the prominent periods of his boyhood and youth ripening into manhood. The "*Sorrows of Youth*" (though some of the poems of this first cycle were written earlier) embrace the years from 1817 to 1821, when they were published in book form; the "*Lyrical Intermezzo*" (interposed between the two trage-

dies "Ratcliff" and "Almansor"), the years 1821 and 1822; the "Home Coming," 1823 and 1824; "The North Sea Cycle," 1825 and 1826.

The "Sorrows of Youth" consists of "Dream Pictures," "Songs," "Romances" (*i.e.*, romantic ballads), and "Sonnets," while "The Book of Songs," in its entirety, mirrors his hopeless youthful love for his cousin Amalie; his earlier songs reflect the boy's love for Josepha, the executioner's daughter. Heine himself has likened the sad and gloomy coloring of the weird "Dream Pictures" to that attachment to Sefchen (diminutive of Josepha), which he says "threw its blood-red shadow over my young life and thoughts." Josepha (all of whose male relations had been executioners) lived with her aunt, the headsman's widow in Düsseldorf. Her company, anxiously avoided by most people, was eagerly sought by the boy Heine, for whom the dark-eyed beauty of sixteen and her somber surroundings had a strange fascination. "No marble statue could compete with her in beauty, and every one of her movements revealed the rhythm of her body, I might even say, the music of her soul," he writes in later years when recalling this attachment, which was a fit prelude to the tragedy of his life and to the story of the man's baneful love. Of the ballads, one, "The Grenadiers," testifies to his youthful admiration of Napoleon; another, "Belshazzar," to his keen insight into the poetical traditions of the Jewish race and to his genuine hatred of despotism. Of the sonnets, the one addressed to his mother, though not the best, is a fine expression of a love that never varied in all the vicissitudes of life.

The "Lyrical Intermezzo" received its name from Heine because he interposed it between the two tragedies

"Ratcliff" and "Almansor." "Ratcliff" shows the influence of the study of Scott; the scene of the more dramatic "Almansor" is laid in Spain. They illustrate Heine's relation to the Romantic School. They are poems in dramatic form without any of the qualities fitting for stage representation. While, in these tragedies, as Heine himself observes, "here and there, betwixt the episodes, blooms many a flower with fragrant heart," the little gems of the "Intermezzo" reveal Germany's great singer.

The "Home Coming," meaning his return to Hamburg, discloses the tragic end of the story of his love for Amalie an event which probably more than any other single fact changed his succeeding life, accounting for much of its bitterness and many discordant notes.

The poems of "The North Sea Cycle," written under the pangs of thwarted passion, are Heine's most peculiar contribution to German literature. No poet has sung the sea as Heine; with its ever-varying mood it reflects best the poet's soul. His stay on the islands of Norderney and Helgoland did not heal his incurable wound. "Late into the night," he writes from Paris, "I stood by the sea and wept. I am not ashamed of those tears. Achilles wept by the sea, and the silver-footed mother rose from the waves to comfort him. I, too, heard a voice from the waves, less consoling—stirring, rather imploring, yet full of wisdom. For the sea knows all things—the stars by night tell it the secrets of heaven; in its depths, beside the sunken fabulous treasures, lie the old, long-silent stories of the earth; on every coast it listens with its thousand curious wavy ears; and the streams that flow into it bring the messages they have gathered in the farthest inland or caught from the gossip-

ing little brooks and mountain rills. But when the sea reveals its secrets and whispers into your heart the great world-redeeming word, then farewell, rest! farewell, quiet dreams!"'

Mr. Edgar Alfred Bowring's subsequent translations of some of the poems in "The Book of Songs," are given with hesitancy because, in spite of their great merit, they cannot convey an adequate idea of the beauty of the originals, which it is impossible to reproduce by any rendering into a foreign tongue.

FROM THE "SORROWS OF YOUTH"

I was asleep, and calmly slept,  
All pain and grief allay'd;  
A wondrous vision o'er me crept  
There came a lovely maid.

As pale as marble was her face,  
And, O, so passing fair!  
Her eyes they swam with pearl-like grace,  
And strangely waved her hair.

And softly, softly moved her foot,  
The pale-as-marble maid;  
And on my heart herself she put,  
The pale-as-marble maid.

How shook and throb'd, half sad, half blest,  
My heart, which hotly burn'd!  
But neither shook nor throb'd her breast,  
Which into ice seem'd turn'd.

"It neither shakes nor throbs, my breast,  
And it is icy cold;  
And yet I know love's yearning blest,  
Love's mighty pow'r of old.

"No color's on my lips and cheek,  
 No blood my veins doth swell;  
 But start not, thus to hear me speak,  
 I love thee, love thee well!"

And wilder still embraced she me,  
 And I was sore afraid;  
 Then crow'd the cock—straight vanish'd she,  
 The pale-as-marble maid.

---

First methought in my affliction,  
 I can never stand the blow—  
 Yet I did—strange contradiction!  
 How I did, ne'er seek to know.

### *The Grenadiers*

Two grenadiers travel'd tow'rds France one day,  
 On leaving their prison in Russia,  
 And sadly they hung their heads in dismay  
 When they reach'd the frontiers of Prussia. . .

For there they first heard the story of woe,  
 That France had utterly perish'd,  
 The grand army had met with an overthrow,  
 They had captured their Emperor cherish'd.

Then both of the grenadiers wept full sore  
 At hearing the terrible story;  
 And one of them said, "Alas! once more  
 My wounds are bleeding and gory."

The other said: "The game's at an end,  
 With thee I would die right gladly,  
 But I've wife and child whom at home I should tend,  
 For without me they'll fare but badly."

"What matters my child, what matters my wife?  
 A heavier care has arisen;  
 Let them beg, if they're hungry, all their life—  
 My Emperor sighs in a prison!"

"Dear brother, pray grant me this one last prayer:  
If my hours I now must number,  
O take my corpse to my country fair,  
That there it may peacefully slumber.

"The legion of honor, with ribbon red,  
Upon my bosom place thou,  
And put in my hand my musket dread,  
And my sword around me brace thou.

"And so in my grave will I silently lie,  
And watch like a guard o'er the forces,  
Until the roaring of cannon hear I,  
And the trampling of neighing horses.

"My Emperor then will ride over my grave,  
While the swords glitter brightly and rattle;  
Then armed to the teeth will I rise from the grave,  
For my Emperor hastening to battle!"

### *To My Mother*

I have been wont to bear my head right high,  
My temper, too, is somewhat stern and rough;  
Even before a monarch's cold rebuff

I would not timidly avert mine eye.

Yet, mother dear, I'll tell it openly:

Much as my haughty pride may swell and puff  
I feel submissive and subdued enough,

When thy much-cherished, darling form is nigh.

Is it thy spirit that subdues me then,

Thy spirit, grasping all things in its ken,

And soaring to the light of heaven again?

By the sad recollection I'm oppress'd

That I have done so much that grieved thy breast,  
Which loved me, more than all things else, the best.

With foolish fancy I deserted thee;

I fain would search the whole world through, to learn

If in it I perchance could love discern,

That I might love embrace right lovingly.

I sought for love as far as eye could see,  
 My hands extending at each door in turn,  
 Begging them not my prayer for love to spurn—  
 Cold hate alone they laughing gave to me.  
 And ever search'd I after love; yes, ever  
 Search'd after love, but love discover'd never,  
 And so I homeward went, with troubled thought;  
 But thou wert there to welcome me again,  
 And ah, what in thy dear eye floated then  
 That was the sweet love I so long had sought.

FROM THE "INTERMEZZO"

The stars in yonder heavens  
 Immovably have stood  
 For thousands of years, regarding  
 Each other in sad loving mood.

They speak a mysterious language,  
 That's rich and sweet to the ear;  
 Yet no philologist living  
 Can make its meaning clear.

But I've learnt it and ne'er will forget it,  
 Whatever the time and the place;  
 As my grammar I used for the purpose  
 My own dear mistress's face.

On song's exulting pinion  
 I'll bear thee, my sweetheart fair,  
 Where Ganges holds his dominion—  
 The sweetest of spots know I there.

There a red blooming garden is lying  
 In the moonlight silent and clear;  
 The lotos flowers are sighing  
 For their sister so pretty and dear.

The violets prattle and titter,  
And gaze on the stars high above;  
The roses mysteriously twitter  
Their fragrant stories of love.

The gazelles, so gentle and clever,  
Skip lightly in frolicsome mood;  
And in the distance roars ever  
The holy river's loud flood.

And there, while joyously sinking  
Beneath the palm by the stream,  
And love and repose while drinking,  
Of blissful visions we'll dream.

---

The lotos flower is troubled  
At the sun's resplendent light;  
With sunken head and sadly  
She dreamily waits for the night.

The moon appears as her wooer,  
She wakes at his fond embrace;  
For him she kindly uncovers  
Her sweetly flowering face.

She blooms and glows and glistens,  
And mutely gazes above;  
She weeps and exhales and trembles  
With love and the sorrows of love.

---

A lonely fir tree is standing  
On a northern barren height;  
It sleeps, and the ice and snow-drift  
Cast round it a garment of white.

It dreams of a slender palm tree,  
Which far in the eastern land  
Beside a precipice scorching  
In silent sorrow doth stand.

---

My little songs do I utter  
From out of my great, great sorrow;  
Some tinkling pinions they borrow,  
And tow'rd her bosom they flutter.

They found it, and over it hover'd  
But soon return'd they, complaining,  
And yet to tell me disdaining  
What they in her bosom discover'd.

---

A youth once loved a maiden,  
Who loved another instead;  
The other himself loved another,  
And with the latter did wed.

The maiden, in scornful anger,  
Straight married the first of the men  
Who happened to come across her—  
The youth was heart-broken then.

'Tis only an old, old story,  
And yet it ever seems new;  
The heart of him whom it pictures  
Will soon be broken in two.

---

A glittering star is falling  
From its shining home in the air;  
The star of love 'tis surely  
That I see falling there.

The blossoms and leaves in plenty  
From the apple tree fall each day,  
The merry breezes approach them,  
And with them merrily play.

The swan in the pool is singing,  
And up and down doth he steer,  
And, singing gently ever,  
Dips under the water clear.

All now is silent and darksome,  
The leaves and blossoms decay,  
The star has crumbled and vanish'd,  
The song of the swan died away.

#### FROM THE "HOME COMING"

In vain would I seek to discover  
Why sad and mournful am I;  
My thoughts without ceasing brood over  
A tale of the times gone by.

The air is cool, and it darkleth,  
And calmly flows the Rhine;  
The peak of the mountain sparkleth,  
While evening's sun doth shine.

Yon sits a wondrous maiden  
On high, a maiden fair;  
With bright golden jewels all laden,  
She combs her golden hair.

She combs it with comb all-golden,  
And sings the while a song;  
How strange is that melody olden,  
As loudly it echoes along!

It fills with wild terror the sailor  
At sea in his tiny skiff;  
He looks but on high, and grows paler,  
Nor sees the rock-girded cliff.

The waves will the bark and its master  
At length swallow up, then methought:  
'Tis Loreley who this disaster  
With her false singing hath wrought.

Thou pretty fisher-maiden,  
 Quick, push thy bark to land;  
 Come hither, and sit beside me,  
 And toy with me, hand in hand.

Recline thy head on my bosom,  
 Nor be so fearful of me;  
 Thou trustest thyself, void of terror,  
 Each day to the raging sea.

My heart is like the ocean,  
 Hath tempest, ebb, and flow,  
 And many pearls full precious  
 Lie in its depths below.

---

When I before thy dwelling  
 At morning happen to be,  
 I rejoice, my little sweet one,  
 When thee at thy window I see.

With thy dark-brown eyes so piercing  
 My figure doth thou scan;  
 Who art thou, and what ails thee,  
 Thou strange and sickly man?

“I am a German poet,  
 Well known in the German land;  
 When the best names in it are reckon’d,  
 My name amongst them will stand.

“My little one, that which ails me  
 Ails crowds in the German land;  
 When the fiercest sorrows are reckon’d,  
 My sorrows amongst them will stand.”

---

My child, we once were children,  
 Two children, little and gay;  
 We crawl’d inside the henhouse,  
 And hid in the straw in play.

We crow'd as the cocks are accustom'd,  
And when the people came by,  
"Cock-a-doodle-doo!"—and they fancied  
'Twas really the cock's shrill cry.

The chests within our courtyard  
With paper we nicely lined,  
And in them lived together,  
In a dwelling quite to our mind.

The aged cat of our neighbor  
Came oft to visit us there;  
We made her our bows and our curtsies,  
And plenty of compliments fair.

For her health we used to inquire,  
In language friendly and soft;  
Since then we have ask'd the same question  
Of many old cats full oft.

We used to sit, while we wisely  
Discoursed, in the way of old men,  
And lamented that all was better  
In the olden days than then;

For love and truth and religion  
From out of the world had fled,  
How very dear was the coffee,  
How scarce was the gold, we said.

Those childish sports have vanish'd,  
And all is fast rolling away;  
The world, and the times, and religion,  
And gold, love, and truth all decay.

---

A flow'ret thou resemblest,  
So pure and fair and blest;  
But when I view thee, sorrow  
Straight creepeth to my breast.

I feel as though inspired  
    My hands on thy head to lay,  
And pray that God may keep thee  
    So blest, fair, pure, for aye.

---

I would that my woes all their fulness  
    In one single word could convey;  
To the merry winds straight would I give it,  
    Who would merrily bear it away.

That word so teeming with sadness  
    They would carry, my loved one, to thee;  
Thou wouldst hear it at every moment,  
    Wouldst hear it where'er thou mightst be.

As soon as thine eyelids at night-time  
    Are peacefully closed in sleep,  
My word would straightway pursue thee  
    Far into thy visions most deep.

---

Thou hast pearls, thou hast diamonds also,  
    Hast all that mortals adore;  
Thine eyes are among the fairest—  
    My loved one, what wouldst thou have more?

Upon thine eyes so beauteous  
    I've written many a score  
Of sweet immortal ballads—  
    My loved one, what wouldst thou have more?

And with thine eyes so beauteous  
    Hast thou tormented me sore,  
And brought me to utter perdition—  
    My loved one, what wouldst thou have more?

## FROM "THE NORTH SEA CYCLE"

*Evening Twilight*

By ocean's pallid strand  
Sat I, tormented in spirit and lonely.  
The sun sank lower and lower, and threw  
Red glowing streaks upon the water,  
And the snowy, spreading billows,  
By the flood hard-press'd,  
Foam'd and roar'd still nearer and nearer—  
A wonderful sound, a whisp'ring and piping,  
A laughing and murmuring, sighing and rushing,  
Between times a lullaby-home-sounding-singing—  
Methinks I hear some olden tradition,  
Primeval, favorite legend,  
Which I erst as a stripling  
Learnt from the neighbors' children,  
When we, on the summer evenings,  
On the house-door's steps all cower'd  
Cosily for quiet talking,  
With our little hearts all attentive,  
And our eyes all wisely curious;  
Whilst the bigger maidens,  
Close by their fragrant flower-pots  
Sat at the opposite window,  
Rosy their faces,  
Smiling, illumed by the moon.

---

*Peace*

High in the heavens there stood the sun  
Cradled in snowy clouds;  
The sea was still;  
And musing I lay at the helm of the ship,  
Dreamily musing—and half in waking  
And half in slumber, I gazed upon Christ,  
The Savior of man.

In streaming and snowy garment  
He wander'd, giant-great,  
Over land and sea;

His head reached high to the heavens,  
His hands he stretch'd out in blessing  
Over land and sea;

And as a heart in his bosom  
Bore he the sun,  
The sun all ruddy and flaming,  
And the ruddy and flaming sunny-heart  
Shed its beams of mercy  
And its beauteous, bliss-giving light,  
Lighting and warming  
Over land and sea.

Sounds of bells were solemnly drawing  
Here and there, like swans were drawing  
By rosy bands the gliding ship,  
And drew it sportively tow'rd the green shore,  
Where men were dwelling, in high and turreted  
O'erhanging town.

O blessings of peace! how still the town!  
Hush'd was the hollow sound  
Of busy and sweltering trade,  
And through the clean and echoing streets  
Were passing men in white attire,  
Palm branches bearing,  
And when two chanced to meet,  
They view'd each other with inward intelligence,  
And trembling, in love and sweet denial,  
Kiss'd on the forehead each other,  
And gazed up on high  
At the Savior's sunny-heart,  
Which, glad and atoningly,  
Beam'd down its ruddy blood,  
And three times blest, thus spake they:  
“Praised be Jesus Christ!”

Following a later edition by Heine's own hand, the jesting remarks usually attached to the last quoted poem are omitted. This appendix is the creation of a different mood and moment. "Belshazzar" (a wonderful paraphrase of the fifth chapter of Daniel) and "The Pilgrimage to Kevlaar" (a treatment of a Catholic legend attributing miraculous healing power to the Virgin Mary of Kevlaar in Rhenish Prussia, which—a masterstroke of Heine's genius—is alike satisfactory to the devout Catholic, to the rationalistic thinker, and to the man of fine poetic feeling) are reluctantly left out, as they hold a place among the best of German ballads. Indeed, it is hard to select from "The Book of Songs"; the lover of Heine will always miss one or another of his favorites.

In "The Book of Songs" Heine has erected to himself a monument which will stand the test of time and make invective powerless. It is, in the well-worded estimate of E. S. Meyer (*The Critic*, March, 1904), "the expression of youth's passionate certainty that life is nothing but love, love with its glorious rapture of possession and its fearful void of loss." Friend and foe must concede that the sentiment to which these songs give utterance, has never found a more beautiful body. No folk-songs have achieved greater popularity, and if the proper test of the song is its singableness, Heine's song has attracted more musical composers than any other. If, on the other hand, the greatness of the poet be measured by his ability to reach beyond the boundaries of his native land, this very fact alone establishes Heine's claim to a prominent place among the lyrical poets of the world. The folk-song is the expression of a mood, of a powerful moment; this characterizes Heine's mind and poetry. He cannot be cited as

the representative of a certain philosophy or speculative view of life. It cannot be said that he made converts to or created a current of abiding thought. He could not. He did not. But, as George Eliot rightly remarks, "Why should we demand of Heine that he should be a hero, a patriot, a solemn prophet, any more than we should demand of a gazelle that it should draw well in harness?" Instead of censuring him for what he neither could nor would (his utterances to the contrary should not be taken too seriously), let us praise him for what he did, and glory in his achievements. He played the harp of love, he played on the strings of the human soul with such perfect mastery that all people capable of passion and emotion listen with love and laughter, with trembling and tears. He spoke the universal language of love, using the vehicle of German speech, which is unsurpassed if not unequaled by any language of the world in its power and adaptability to depth and height and all the intervening notes of singable passion.





JOSEPH VICTOR VON SCHEFFEL

## CHAPTER IX

SCHEFFEL: "THE TRUMPETER OF SÄCKINGEN,"  
A LYRICAL EPIC OF GERMAN STUDENT LIFE;  
"EKKEHARD," AN HISTORICAL NOVEL

1826-1886

And Germans never tired of Victor Scheffel's chronicle of St. Gall, "Ekkehard," nor ever lavished more enthusiastic praises upon any poem than upon Scheffel's chronicle in verse, "The Trumpeter of Säckingen."—Coar: "*Studies in German Literature in the Nineteenth Century*," p. 297.

Joseph Victor Scheffel was born at Karlsruhe, February 16, 1826. His family being in easy circumstances, his youth was entirely free from money cares. At the age of seventeen he matriculated as student of jurisprudence at the University of Munich. In conformity with the German custom (already mentioned), he studied in several universities, the first year in Munich, the second in Heidelberg, the third in Berlin, returning to Heidelberg to prepare for his examinations. While still a gay "Fuchs" (the term fox is applied to students of the first, and eventually of the second, year), he became a member of a jovial fraternity in Heidelberg. Many of the songs in his "Gaudeamus," published in 1867, were first sung in this gay circle. At the close of the first semester of his fourth year, his father, Major Scheffel, a serious-minded man fond of order and system, peremp-

torily requested him to finish his studies at home, and to enforce his command sent his servant to assist the young student in packing up. Referring to his student years, Scheffel says: "If one takes up my 'Gaudeamus' and reads all the thirsty songs in succession, he may well exclaim: 'Ah, but he had a high old time in his student days.' But he would be wrong, I have been heartily gay in the inner circle of my friends, and have enjoyed student life as much as any one. But all that had its time. I was regularly in the lecture-room, and did not spare myself trouble in honestly working through the *corpus juris* and all the rest of the heavy stuff pertaining to legal knowledge." Besides the study of law, which he elected in obedience to his father's wishes, he also attended lectures on history and art. It had always been his wish to become an artist. All his writings are permeated with a fine feeling for nature. He passed his "state examination" in the summer of 1848, and received from the University of Heidelberg the degree of Doctor of Laws *summa cum lauda*, January 11, 1849.

From the beginning of 1850 to September, 1851, he practised law in Säckingen. As his professional duties were light, he had ample time to indulge his love of nature in the beautiful scenery of this old town and its environment, and to study its annals and local traditions. In 1852 he gave up the profession of law and went to Italy to study art. While here he recognized that his true vocation was not art, but literature. In the dedication of the "Trumpeter" to his parents, dated Capri, May 1, 1853, he says:

'Twas in Rome! Upon the seven-hill'd  
City heavy lay the winter;  
Yes, so heavy Marcus Brutus'  
Self a cold must have contracted;  
And it rained *sans intermission*;  
Then the Schwarzland, as in vision,  
Rose before me, and the story  
Of the young musician Werner  
And the lovely Margaretha.  
By their grave where Rhine is flowing  
In my youth I've stood full often.  
All at once, just as a sudden  
Singing fills our ears, in token  
That at home of us they're thinking,  
In my ears rang Werner's trumpet.  
Through the Roman winter, through the  
Flower-sports of the Carnival,  
First far off, then nearer, nearer  
Rang its notes, and like the crystal,  
That from forms of filmy vapor  
Settles, flashes into radiance,  
Grew to shape my song's ideals.  
They pursued me down to Naples.  
There in the Bourbon Museum  
My old Baron stood, and smiling  
Shook his staff in menace at me;  
At the entrance of Pompeii,  
Sat the tom-cat Hiddigeigei:  
Snarlingly he said, 'Your studies,  
Quit them! What's all ancient lumber,  
Match'd 'gainst me, the inly pensive  
Epic cat, for character?'"

After vainly striving to exorcise these phantoms, he followed Hiddigeigei's advice, and crossing the bay of Naples to the city of Capri, gave them form and radiant life, in Don Pagano's tavern. The result is his epic,

"The Trumpeter of Säckingen," published in 1853. This poem, full of love for nature and his native land, found a ready response in the hearts of his countrymen. During the next year he completed his "Ekkehard," which he published in 1855. This historical novel was planned, and the greater part written, as he tells us in the preface to the book, on the spots which it describes, the region between the Schwarzwald (Black Forest) and the Bodensee (Lake of Constance) in the southwestern part of Germany.

Scheffel's period of literary production is less than a decade, although the dates of the publication of his works might seem to indicate otherwise. "Hugideo," published in 1883, was written in 1857; "Juniperus," published in 1866, was written in 1859; "Frau Aventiure," published in 1863, is a collection of songs covering more than six years; the songs of the "Gaudeamus," published in 1868, were written at different periods; even the "Bergpsalm," published in 1870, was written ten years earlier, as is shown by the correspondence between Scheffel and his mother. In "Ekkehard," Scheffel's literary career reached its high-water mark. After this he produced occasional poems, sketches, and fragments, although as long as he lived he was occupied with preparatory studies for the great poetical works which he carried in his mind. In fact, "Juniperus," "Frau Aventiure," and the "Bergpsalm" may be regarded as fragments of a great unwritten story of the Wartburg.

To what cause is the sudden cessation of a spring which had seemed so full and clear, to be attributed? Johannes Proelss, his biographer, finds it in the natural "reverse sides of his great qualities as man and poet,"

and in a chain of unfortunate circumstances extending over three years: first, a serious breakdown of both mind and body in the summer of 1855, brought about by over-work in the ardent heat of Venice; then a second prostration, during the next year, following a hurried trip to the south of France; thirdly, the death, in 1857, of his talented and beautiful sister Marie, his housekeeper, companion, friend, the being dear to him above all others. Richard M. Meyer, the author of a "History of German Literature of the Nineteenth Century," sees an already deranged nervous condition, in the feverish energy which stimulated him to overwork, finding the cause in Scheffel's own nature. He quotes Schopenhauer's words, "Neither our deeds nor the course of our lives is our work, but undoubtedly, what nobody takes into account, our bearing (*Wesen*) and being (*Dasein*)."

Indeed, even in the "Trumpeter" and "Ekkehard" a careful observer detects an ironical, almost pessimistic, vein and a certain inclination towards solitude. The former has its "silent man," the latter its "old man of the heath." Whatever the cause, after his sister's death his melancholy became settled, and his nervous derangement manifested itself in a restlessness which craved, now enlivening society, now calming isolation.

In 1864 he was married to Caroline von Walzen, daughter of the Bavarian ambassador at Karlsruhe. The fourth preface to the "Trumpeter," written after a visit to Säckingen with his young wife, breathes a spirit of happiness which recalls the dedication, and is in striking contrast to the tone of the intervening prefaces.

Their idyllic life at Seon, Switzerland, was interrupted the next year by the death of his gifted mother, to whom,

as many other men of literary renown, he was chiefly indebted for his genius. This death brought about their removal to Karlsruhe. To circumstances attendant upon this change the overthrow of their domestic happiness has been attributed. In 1867, shortly after the birth of their son, the marriage was dissolved, at the demand of the wife.

Despite his long period of comparative unproductiveness, Scheffel remained, especially for the youth of Germany, one of her best loved poets. Before his death one hundred and forty editions of the "Trumpeter," ninety of "Ekkehard," fifty of "Gaudeamus," and fifty-five of his other works taken together, had appeared—five hundred thousand copies in round numbers. His fiftieth birthday was celebrated by all Germany. Among the special honors awarded him was his ennoblement. More monuments and memorial tablets have been erected to Joseph Victor von Scheffel than to any other writer.

His last poem was in honor of the five hundredth anniversary of his Alma Mater in the summer of 1886. When its ringing conclusion, "All hail to thee, Old Heidelberg, thou fairest," was sung by students, old and young, its author had already passed from earth. He died after long suffering, at Karlsruhe, April 9, 1886. His reconciled wife and his son were with him in his last hours.

Scheffel's literary claims rest, aside from his student songs, upon "The Trumpeter of Säckingen" and "Ekkehard."

“THE TRUMPETER OF SÄCKINGEN”

1853

The main incidents of “The Trumpeter of Säckingen” were suggested by a story connected with an old tombstone which Scheffel often saw during his residence in this old town on the Rhine. This stone dates from the seventeenth century, and commemorates, in a Latin inscription, the incomparable love and peaceful death of Werner Kirchhof and his wife, Maria Ursula de Schonauw.

The poem is a lyrical epos of sixteen cantos; the bulk of it is written in trochaic tetrameters. Its hero, young Werner, is a native of Heidelberg and a student in the university. In consequence of drinking too much beer with the dwarf Perkeo, court fool to the palsgrave and tender of the great Heidelberg Tun, he had sung a hair-brained ditty to the palsgravine. For this offense, the rector magnificus had sentenced him to quit the university and city in three days. He goes on horseback, rapier at his side, and trumpet slung over his shoulder, through the Black Forest towards Säckingen. The genial pastor of a little village near the latter city entertains him, listens to his story, and advises him to seek counsel of the Holy Fridolinus, patron saint of Säckingen, whose fête was to be celebrated the morrow with the customary annual procession. Young Werner goes to town, witnesses the ceremonies, and falls in love at first sight with a beautiful girl, the fourth in the train of young maidens. This “sweet fourth” is the high-born Margaretha de Schönau from the castle overlooking the town and river. Werner borrows, without leave, a boat which he finds by the shore, rows down the Rhine to a sand bank not far from the

bridge, from whence he sees castle turrets gleaming in the moonbeams through the chestnut trees. He steps out on the bank and blows sennets up toward a turret window, in which a light gleams:

“And the north wind blew the echoes  
Silently upward, toward the castle.”

The Baron of Schönau, a gouty veteran lancer colonel, who loves his daughter, his pipe, his beer, his cat Hiddigeigei, and music, is in want of a trumpeter for his orchestra. As he suddenly hears gladsome trumpet sounds, he sends his servant Anton to seek out the musician and bid him to the castle. Werner becomes an inmate of the castle; he takes part in a May-day fishing excursion, where he is crowned by Margaretha as the most skilful blower of the trumpet obligato; he leads the orchestra at the fête in honor of the baron's birthday; with the aid of Cupid, teaches Margaretha to blow the trumpet; visits the “silent man” in the gnome's grotto; and he is wounded fighting the peasants in the Hauenstein riot. As he walks in the garden for the first time on his recovery, Margaretha chides him so affectionately for having exposed himself to needless danger that he gathers her to his heart and kisses her. They plight their troth.

The next day Werner asks Margaretha's hand of her father, but the old baron, who believes in the fixed social order of noble, burgher, and peasant, declares that no trumpet-blower should dare woo a noble maiden. Without venturing a farewell word with his loved one, Werner girds his knapsack, saddles his palfrey, and rides away. One canto (No. 14), is made up of songs: Songs of Werner while in the castle and on departing; songs of the tom-cat Hiddigeigei, the pessimistic philosopher;

songs of the silent man; Margaretha's songs; and Werner's songs written in Italy five years later. The following is a stanza from the well-known farewell song of young Werner:

"This is the bitterness of life's long story,  
That ever near the rose the thorns are set;  
Poor heart, that dwells at first in dreams of glory,  
The parting comes, and eyes with tears are wet.  
Ah, once I read thine eyes, thy spirit's prison,  
And love and joy in their clear depths could see:  
May God protect thee! 'twas too fair a vision,  
May God protect thee! it was not to be."

Margaretha "grieves through weary months and years" for her lover. The good old lady abbess of the religious home in Säckingen begs the baron to allow his daughter to accompany her on a journey she is about to make to Rome in the interest of her community. The baron gives his consent. In St. Peter's Margaretha recognizes her lover among the train of singers. She sinks unconscious on the marble pavement. The Holy Father, Innocentius XI, learns the story of the love of his choir-leader and the pale-faced maiden. On the first morning of July, 1697, he gives an audience to the abbess and Margaretha, orders Werner to be fetched, and speaks in kindly accents:

"Those whom Providence hath guided  
Here and graciously united,  
Life shall no more put asunder.  
Yester morning in St. Peter's  
And to-day, within this garden,  
Have I thoroughly convinced me  
That a case is here before me  
Needing papal intervention."

Since the baron had found the name of Werner Kirchhof "far too simple," the pope appoints him knight of his most noble order, with the title of Marquis Camposanto (the Italian equivalent for Kirchhof). He betroths the pair with his blessing, while the abbess weeps tears of gladness.

One of the chief merits of the poem, which is permeated with youth and joy, is the spontaneity of its tone. Its author's love for Heidelberg rings out clear in the oft-quoted song:

"Old Heidelberg, thou fairest  
    Of cities fair and free!  
Nor Rhine's nor Neckar's rarest  
    Can bear the palm from thee."

His dislike for the study of jurisprudence is plainly told:

"Roman Law, when I recall thee  
    Lies upon my breast a mountain,  
    Lies a millstone in my stomach,  
    And my head seems changed to timber!"

The whole poem is instinct with life. Sir Tempest, the pine trees, the chestnuts in the baron's garden, the Rhine, in fact all inanimate nature, gains, under the poet's touch, the gift of speech. Listen to Sir Rhine as he rises splashing from the billows crowned with rushes:

"Fear me not, my youthful dreamer,  
    For I know the shoe that pinches.  
    Oh, you men awake my laughter!  
    Each believes he bears his secret  
    Through the world unguessed of any;  
    And yet every beetle knows it.

. . . . .

Have no fear, I know what love is.  
Ah, my own heart beats more wildly  
As I greet the Schwartzwald's mountains,

For I know my darling hastens,  
My young Wiese of the Schwartzwald,  
Hushed and coy, to my embraces.

And I love her; never can I  
Gaze my fill of her eyes' heaven.  
And I love her; never can I  
Kiss my fill of her cheeks' roses.

Yes, I love her. I am courted  
By full many a lovely lady.  
None, not e'en the haughty Mosel,  
With her dower of vineyards, wins me  
From the memory of the Wiese,  
Dainty daughter of the Schwartzwald.

His description of the tom-cat Hiddigeigei is a contribution to the famous animals of literature:

"Stretched beside the Baron's footstool,  
Dainty lay the gallant tom-cat,  
Hiddigeigei, with the sable  
Velvet coat and tail majestic.

Hiddigeigei to the Rhineland  
Came with haughty Leonora [*The deceased wife of the Baron*]  
Loyal and trusted.  
Somewhat lonely  
Ran the thread of his existence,  
For he hated all communion  
With the vulgar German cat-folk.

Dignified, though isolated,  
 Always dignified and stately,  
 Dwelt he in the Baron's castle,  
 Paced its halls with measured footsteps.  
 Deeply tuneful was his purring,  
 And, in anger, when indignant  
 He would arch his supple backbone,  
 When each hair rose bristling upward,  
 Gentleness he still would study  
 To unite with dignity.  
 But when over roof and gable  
 He would clamber, agile, daring,  
 Sallying forth upon a mouse-hunt,  
 When mysterious in the moonlight  
 Flashed his emerald eyes and sparkled,  
 Then, e'en envy must acknowledge,  
 Hiddigeigei was imposing."

When young Werner kisses Margaretha in the garden,  
 Hiddigeigei from the terrace staircase philosophizes:

"Why do people kiss each other?  
 'Tis not hate, nor is it hunger.  
 They nor bite nor eat each other.  
 'Tis not blind and bootless nonsense,  
 For they act, in other matters,  
 Shrewdly, and with wit and prudence.  
 Why, then, all in vain I query,  
 Why do people kiss each other?  
 Why especially the young ones?  
 Why these specially in spring-time?  
 On this knotty point, to-morrow,  
 Will I, on the roof's high gable,  
 Make my earnest meditation."

The final quotations are of passages often selected by artists for illustration. They scarcely need other illustration than the words of their author:

"In the hall again the Baron  
Sat beside his lovely daughter,  
And again his pipe was smocking  
When the lofty, folding portals  
Opened, and with modest greeting,  
Werner entered.

. . . . .

With keen eye the Baron glances  
At young Werner, judging of him;  
And beside him, nestling closely  
By his seat, sweet Margaretha  
Cast shy glances toward the stranger.  
And on both the first impression  
Was a happy one and pleasant."

Margaretha, about to enter the garden pavilion, sees the trumpet lying on the table:

"How I wonder, she reflected,  
Whether I, myself, could waken  
With a breath some sort of music?  
I should dearly love to try it!  
No one sees what I am doing,  
Near me is no living creature.

. . . . .

Timidly the maiden entered,  
Timid, lifted up the trumpet.  
To her rosy lips she pressed it.  
But 'twas almost terror thrilled her,  
For, within its golden chalice,  
Lo, her sweet breath was transmuted  
To a peal, loud, harsh, and shrilling,  
Which the breezes carried onward."

Young Werner down by the river hears the trumpet sounds, and with uplifted arm hurries to the pavilion to punish the gardener's boy, whom he supposes to be the culprit. As he enters his arm falls helpless by his side:

"For he saw sweet Margaretha,  
At her lips the glancing trumpet,  
With her dainty cheeks distended  
Like the little carven angels,  
Who are blowing trumps and trombones  
In the Church of Fridolinus."

"EKKEHARD"

1855

"Ekkehard," a story of the tenth century, is founded on the chronicles of the monastery of St. Gall, begun by the monk Rupert and continued till the end of the fourth century by Ekkehard, the younger. The main thread of the story is very simple: Hadwig, widow of old Duke Burkhard, ruled the Suabian land and was patroness of the monasteries around the lake. The cloisters of St. Gall and Reichenau were filled with monks and cloister scholars, and the whole lake region teemed with primitive and vigorous life.

The duchess, impelled by a vague longing and discontent, visits the monastery of St. Gall with her maid, the Greek Praxedis, and a numerous train. Abbot Cralo refuses at first to admit her, because their canonical law forbids a woman's foot to cross the threshold; he yields, however, to her second demand, for the duchess, despite her youth and beauty, held the scepter with a firm hand. In order to keep the letter of the law, the duchess is borne across the threshold by the fair-haired young Custos, Ekkehard.

While she was being carried in his arms, she thought, "Certainly, the cowl of St. Benedict never covered a more graceful head than this one"; and Ekkehard, as he

deferentially put down his burden in the cool cloister, was struck by the fact that the distance from the gate had never appeared so short to him before. "I fear that you found me very heavy," said the duchess. "My liege lady," was his reply, "I can say of you, as has been written, my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The next morning the duchess refuses the exquisite parting gift offered by the abbot, claiming instead a roll of Virgil and a teacher for the same. The abbot demurs: "Since when are the disciples of St. Gall bestowed as parting gift?" to which the duchess answers: "I presume you understand me. The fair-haired Custos is to be my teacher; and three days hence, at the latest, he and the volume of Virgil must present themselves at my castle! Remember that the settlement of the disputed land in the Rhine valley, as well as the confirmation of the monastery's rights in Suabia are in my hands—and so farewell, Sir Cousin!"

Instead of the spacious chamber assigned him by the duchess on the same corridor with her own hall and apartments, Ekkehard, in order not to be disturbed in his meditations, chooses an airy in the tower of the Hohentwiel. At his choice, a cloudlet overshadows Dame Hadwig's fair face—this cloudlet is ominous of the end. The duchess, bored by the monotony of her life, and loving the handsome young monk in her imperious fashion, seeks by fair words and signal tokens of her favor to win his affection. Ekkehard meets these advances, first with an innocent blindness which piques her pride and provokes her anger; then with a stern self-control which humiliates her haughty heart; at last, with a dejection which at moments turns her love into scorn, for the duchess is a

woman of moods. It is at such a moment that the pent-up passion in the monk's heart flames forth. In the chapel of the Hohentwiel he clasps the duchess in his arms, presses her to his breast, and stills her reproaches with kisses. As she strives to free herself from his embrace, Rudimann, from the rival monastery of Reichenau, who has besides a private grievance to avenge, crosses the threshold. The duchess declares Ekkehard a madman, who has forgotten himself and God. He is taken prisoner, freed by Praxedis, secreted by the parish priest, and rowed across the lake. He becomes a hermit on the Säntis, where he is nursed through a fever by a herdsman. In the fresh Alpine air he gains strength to wonder at his past folly. Letting the dead past bury its dead, he resolves to build up a nobler and a more beautiful world on the ruins of the old. Here he writes the Walthari-song.

The Walthari-song was written in Latin by Ekkehard I, of St. Gall, in the first half of the tenth century. It was afterwards revised by Ekkehard IV. With poetic freedom Scheffel has united in his Ekkehard characteristics belonging to several monks of this name. The song describes the flight of Walther of Aquitania and his betrothed, Hildegund of Burgundy, from the court of Attila, King of the Huns, where they were held as hostages. On their way home a grim hand-to-hand battle is fought with King Gunther of Worms and his twelve thanes. After the fight is over, the two champions, Walthari and Hagen, the former bereft of his right hand, the latter of one eye and his teeth, crack jokes at each other's expense over the wine-cup.

One year from the day of the duchess's visit to St.

Gall, she is sitting in the castle garden with Praxedis, "who has unpleasant times now, as her mistress is discontented and reserved." Suddenly the evening silence is broken by the hissing of an arrow, which drops at the duchess's feet. On the thin leaves of parchment wrapped around the shaft is inscribed, in a well-known hand, "A parting salutation to the Duchess of Suabia. Blessed is the man who has conquered temptation." It was the Walthari-song. The proud woman bowed her head and wept bitterly.

And Ekkehard went out into the wide world. Neither the Hohentwiel nor St. Gall saw him again. Praxedis returned richly dowered to Byzantium; the duchess never remarried, Ekkehard's name was never heard from her lips, but she knew the Walthari-song almost by heart.

This simple story is adorned by great wealth of detail. The life of the old monks who sat behind the chronicles is revived in vivid colors: the cautious abbot, Romcia the watchman, the wicked Sintram who kept Ovid's "Art of Love" concealed in his straw pallet, together with many others, move across the page like living men, with human hearts under their monks' habits. The episode of the two children, Audifak the goat-herd and Hadumoth the goose-girl, is an idyl in itself; while in "the old woman of the wood" is incorporated the remnant of an earlier heathen time. Although the novel is founded on conscientious historical study, the historian and philologue is always subordinated to the poet. "Ekkehard" is a work of creative art.

If Scheffel's place in literature is not yet clearly defined, its permanency is well established. No poet has been honored more by contemporary praise and applause.

His unprecedented popularity has not abated since his death. Let us admit that his poetry often lacks measured artistic roundness, but let us beware of denying its divine inspiration. His songs will live forever in the hearts of the young, and of those who though aging in years remain young in spirit. As long as the academical youth of Germany clings to those ideal conceptions which distinguish the German student body and German university life from similar organizations in other countries, "The Trumpeter of Säckingen" and his clear notes will find an enthusiastic public. "Ekkehard" is one of the best historical novels of the last half century, and a fair model for writers cultivating this line of literary work. Its true descriptions are adorned by a thoroughly patriotic sentiment. Joseph Victor von Scheffel is essentially a German poet. All who sympathize with German life and its wholesome cheer, will welcome in him one of its foremost representatives in literature.



GUSTAV FREYTAG



WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER



JOHANN GOTTFRIED VON HERDER



## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

Tusting that the preceding analysis and discussion of some masterpieces of German literature, with the cursory reviews of the life and works of their authors, does not present a distorted view to the reader, the subsequent remarks are intended to give a glimpse of some literary aims and tendencies in force during the remarkable century, which at its dawn, witnessed the decomposition of a German empire, and in its latter half, under the guidance of the Iron Chancellor, its reconstruction upon an entirely new basis.

In the spiritual life of a nation the poet's position is similar to that of the discoverer of a new truth in the field of natural science. Next to the power of invention, which is the characteristic of the poet and his creative work, is the art of defining the qualities which constitute its merits. Literary criticism is the indispensable concomitant of literary production, supplying reader as well as writer with a standard of judgment. However wide the range of the poet's license, there are some fixed principles governing artistic creation which he cannot pass by unheeded. Writers, as a rule, are also good critics, and the literary critic, if not taking first rank as a poet, must have poetic feeling and power. Literature and life are linked by the poet, the interpreter of life; the worth of the genuine critic depends upon the same faculty of inter-

pretation, the lack of which disqualifies him even as a judge in æsthetics.

In the light of these observations, I shall say a few words about Gottfried Herder, Gustav Freytag, and Richard Wagner, and their activity as precursors, pathfinders, and prophets. Five years before Goethe's death, at the time when Heine published his "Book of Songs," there began to appear an edition of the works of Gottfried Herder in sixty volumes. Herder, the literary critic of the so-called classical period, supplements and continues for his own generation the critical work of Lessing, whom he outlived by more than twenty-two years. His "Fragments Concerning Recent German Literature" appeared in the same year as Lessing's "Minna von Barnhelm" (1767); his essay on the "Origin of Language" is simultaneous with Lessing's "Emilia Galotti" (1772). "Flying Sheets on German Style and Art" was written in collaboration with Goethe, who published the same year his "Goetz von Berlichingen" (1773); the next year appeared Goethe's "Sorrows of Werther" and "Clavigo," and Herder's "The Oldest Record of the Human Race." While Lessing was planning and shaping his "Nathan the Wise," Herder was busy collecting and translating his folk-songs, later republished as the "Voices of the Nations in Songs." While Schiller wrote his earlier dramas and his histories, Goethe his "Egmont" and his psychological dramas, "Iphigenie" and "Tasso," Herder worked out "Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind." While Goethe and Schiller in their "Xenia" tried to elevate public taste with a view towards the æsthetic education of man, Herder wrote his "Letters for the Advancement of Humanity," completed in the year of the publica-

tion of Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea." Two years after Herder's death, his "Cid," a metrical paraphrase of Spanish ballads of high poetic value, was published in 1805. The latter poem is read more by the German people than any of those writings by which he exercised a guiding influence upon the foremost German thinkers and poets.

In the literary circle of Weimar, where he had been called as court preacher on Goethe's recommendation, Herder was highly honored; his æsthetic judgments were deemed the gospel of truth.

The titles of the works of Herder indicate the wide range of his thoughts, which are essentially modern. The modern view of language and literature as the expression of the nation's life, as the revelation of the people's soul, is in large measure due to Herder. Conceiving the epic as the living history of the people, the folk-song as the melodious course of a passion or a sentiment, the animal characters in the fable resting on Nature's consistency and constancy as national and human types, and warning the artist to beware of imitations of past and foreign styles, Herder demanded from him a true expression of life as he saw it. Not by cold reasoning, but by powerful intuition, he comprehended life in its totality, discovering the same fundamental laws in its varied phenomena. To him the God of history was the God of nature, for the natural laws by which the Deity reveals itself must reign in man likewise. In the beauty of Homer, of the Bible, of Shakespeare, and of popular poetry he recognized the kinship to nature and its eternal laws. Not a poet himself, not even a model writer, he sowed the seeds for true poetic production, and became a

teacher of poets. Considering national pride as "absurd, ridiculous, and dangerous," he conceived of a noble rivalry of nations as well as of individuals in the service of humanity. Not fond of religious controversy, he emphasized the essential fact that true religion cannot exist without morality, and that true religion is morality.

It was Herder who gave currency to these ideas which have penetrated our whole thought. Herder's method and his viewpoint are to-day the underlying norms from which it is perilous to deviate. For the method of comparison which Herder employed throughout, whether consciously or unconsciously, and which lies at the root of all research, his immense reading and his knowledge of foreign poetry furnished an abundance of material. He may be said to be the father of the study of comparative literature. With his intuitive and prophetic vision he traced in the spiritual world and all its various manifestations the law of evolution, thus becoming a forerunner and guide for the generations that followed him, and establishing the proper viewpoint for our own age.

While Herder, though a German to the core, reflected the cosmopolitan spirit of his age, Gustav Freytag concentrated his efforts upon the investigation of German custom and character. Born after the downfall of Napoleon, he witnessed in a life of nearly seventy-nine years the rise of the national idea, the glory of German victories, and the founding of the present German empire. Beginning his public career as docent of the German language and literature at the University of Berlin, he afterwards became joint editor with the literary historian Julian Schmidt (not two years his junior) of a leading German periodical. Summoned to the headquarters of the German crown

prince, where he remained during part of the Franco-Prussian War, he had a rare opportunity of seeing how history is made. Freytag was a novelist and dramatic writer, and in both directions he exercised a sovereign influence upon his century. His goal was not the transformation of modern life, but the interpretation of its manifold characteristics and the artistic presentation of its ruling tendencies. In his novels he sought and interpreted the peculiar mission and work of his people; in "Debit and Credit" he faithfully represents the German merchant, in "The Lost Manuscript" he introduces us to the professional circles and the German university with incidental pictures of court life, and in his ambitious series of the six novels, published collectively under the title "Our Ancestors," he gives a description of German life from the time of the Romans to the Napoleonic wars. This vast task, executed during the decade following the Franco-Prussian War, was preceded by his "Pictures of the German Past," in four volumes. These, written in a massive and masterful style reminding the reader of Macaulay, are a permanent treasure of German literature. The result of earnest study and thought is evident in his novels, which, wholesomely patriotic, have a large reading public, and though not of even merit, are models for writers cultivating the social and historical novel. Of his dramas, "The Journalists," with its humorous presentation of German politics, is the best. This comedy does not suffer greatly by a comparison with Lessing's masterpiece in this *genre*, in which German literature is not especially fruitful. But Freytag's name is still more closely coupled with the great critic of the eighteenth century in "The Technic of the Drama" (published in

1863, and evidently inspired by the series of dramatic criticisms which appeared in 1767-1769 under the title of "Hamburg Dramaturgy"), which has become in this and other countries the basis of modern college text-books for the study of structure and composition of the drama.

A very peculiar place in German literature is held by the distinguished musician of the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner. Born three years earlier than Freytag, he died in 1883, in his seventieth year. His period of productiveness extending into the ninth decade of the century covers about the same four decades as that of his contemporary. Wagner's importance as a factor and molder of German thought is not yet fully understood. His claim for consideration in the history of German literature is based not alone upon his literary works, though the ten volumes appearing 1871-1885 would be amply sufficient to establish him as a genuine poet and as a creative critic of literature and life who has an important message for his own and succeeding generations. Turning away from the misery and baseness of every-day life, he appealed to the slumbering idealism of his fellow-men by reviving in his musical dramas the glorious traditions of a remote past. He, as no one else, has aroused the popular consciousness to a right valuation of the beauty of Germanic lore and legends, which had found literary embodiment in the first great period of German literature. Wagner, the musician, furnished the weapons to Wagner, the poet. As in painting Adolf Menzel and the highly gifted Arnold Böcklin reformed their art by substituting the natural and characteristic for the typical, the latter uniting with the unfailing sense of nature a wonderful strength of imagination and a keen appreciation of the

miraculous, so Richard Wagner changed the musical conception of his time and enlarged its territory by realms undreamed of by his predecessors. Romanticism, idealism, and realism enter in Wagner's music into a harmonious union. The essential oneness of all art, which Wagner tried to demonstrate by writing the libretto of his great musical tetralogy the "Ring of the Nibelung," has never been more boldly and more emphatically proclaimed than in his prophetic work on "The Art of the Future." The coöperation of music, poetry, painting, and the plastic arts in stage representation was the dream for the realization of which he worked. In this collectivistic, comprehensive idea, Wagner sounded the keynote of his century. By inner necessity Wagner is in sympathy with the longings of the German people and the best ideals of socialism. His voice rings out clearly in his critical work, making him the prophet of future great developments. Though not a dramatist in the literal and customary use of the term, the fact that dramatic composition is again in modern Germany the literary form for expressing the national life, is in no small degree due to Wagner's comprehensive genius. The chief inaugurators of the modern tendencies in German literature found waiting for their work a stage which had been elevated and dignified by his great masterpieces. They naturally and inevitably turned to the drama as the timely garb for their ideas.

The center of the literary life of the present generation is Berlin. Since the Prussian king has become the German emperor the best efforts of national endeavor have found a strong reflex in the life of the capital. Paris has often been said to be France. Though Berlin never will be able to concentrate and present all the national striv-

ings in a similar degree, it is safe to assert that for the study of modern tendencies Berlin affords undoubtedly the best opportunities. The nation's great issues, her anxieties, and aspirations are mirrored in the productions of the stage, which has become again a powerful factor. Emperor and subject, the rulers and the ruled, recognize the importance and weight of this undeniable fact. What is maintained here may fitly be illustrated by a brief discussion of the three chief representatives of the modern drama, Ernst von Wildenbruch, Hermann Sudermann, and Gerhart Hauptmann. All three are still living and active in the service of their ideals. All three have studied in the school of Henrik Ibsen, but their indebtedness is not greater than that of most writers to contemporaries. Nevertheless, the Germans have to thank the great Norwegian for the stimulus he afforded to his German brother dramatists.

Ernst von Wildenbruch, the oldest of the three writers, is in his fiftieth year. He was born on the 3d of February, 1845, at Beirut in Syria. It is not without significance for his development that the years of his childhood, when men are most susceptible to impressions, were largely spent in foreign lands, and that his father held honorable positions, bestowed as a mark of distinction by the German government, being Prussian consul general at the time of Ernst's birth and later ambassador at Athens and Constantinople. When his mother took up her abode in Germany for the sake of having her son educated in the fatherland, Wildenbruch was a lad of almost twelve years. His education at Francke's Pedagogium in Halle-an-der-Saale, continued in the French gymnasium in Berlin and in the *Kadettencorps*, the military academy

GERHART HAUPTMANN



ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH



HERMANN SUDERMANN





at Potsdam, was certainly calculated to consolidate the principle of loyalty and love to the paternal German government instilled into the boy's soul while abroad. After four years of service he resigned, in 1865, his commission in the regular army as officer of the First Guards. The next year he enlisted again, participating in the Prussian campaign against Austria, and subsequently in the Franco-Prussian War, which resulted in the foundation of the modern German empire. After completing his preparatory education in the Gymnasium of Burg, he studied law at the University of Berlin, and following the traditions of his family, entered the service of the government. He holds the honorary degree of doctor of philosophy, conferred upon him by the University of Jena, and the title of councilor of legation, bestowed upon him by the German emperor. Wildenbruch lives in or near Berlin, the seat of the imperial court. Besides being a dramatist, Wildenbruch is a writer of ballads and patriotic hymns, of short stories and novels. The former, though somewhat pompous, are full of genuine enthusiasm; the short stories contained in the collection published under the title "*Childhood's Tears*," are true descriptions of life as he had seen it with his own eyes. "*Noble Blood*," the graphic scenes of which are laid in a military academy, and "*The Last One*," describing the tragic fate of an army officer, who after his wife's death is deprived of his four children, are perfect psychologic gems, and show a deep feeling for those sad occurrences in life which baffle our understanding, vainly seeking for an explanation of their justice. But Wildenbruch was not content to confine himself to a field in which he was easily master, he longed to express his views of life and history in the

current form of the drama. No wonder that the patriotic poet turned to the early history of his nation. His historical, or rather patriotic plays, on the whole, have been successful on the German stage. It is through them that he becomes the representative of a tendency in German life which, for want of a better appellation, might be termed the imperialistic tendency. In the royal Thiergarten, the Park of Berlin, there is an avenue which is lined by magnificent marble statues, representing German rulers from the first Brandenburg Margrave down to old Emperor William, and illustrating the history of a great dynasty, upon which the loyal German may look with just pride. Back of each of the superhuman-sized rulers, are the busts of two of the best thinkers or poets of the corresponding reign. Glancing at the small head of Kant, who revolutionized the world of philosophical thought, and comparing it with a large figure of his king, who was not especially noted for mental greatness, it is impossible to suppress a smile. This avenue of Victory (so called from the goddess on a high column in the rotunda to which the avenue leads) was executed after a conception of the present emperor. It is not the gigantic figure of history that walks through this fine avenue, nor does she stride over the stage in Wildenbruch's plays. As you tire of this long row of potentates (the witty Berlin inhabitant calls this avenue the "dolls' alley"), thus the nation will tire of Wildenbruch's glorification of kings. In 1900 I witnessed a representation of one of Wildenbruch's plays, "*The Quitzows*," in the Royal Theater of Berlin. The seats of the first balcony were filled with glittering gala uniforms of army officers; the actors were doing their best, but there was no

applause. It was as if the audience performed a duty in listening to the enthusiastic passages exalting the Burggraf von Nürnberg, but had little faith in the poet's rendition of history. Even the best of Wildenbruch's plays, dealing with the history of the Kulturkampf, "Henry and Henry's House," deviates from history, without any apparent reason, to justify this poetic license before the judgment-seat of a higher poetic inner truth. "Henry and Henry's House," dealing with the great struggle between the German empire and the Roman papacy, is full of passages that speak to the German heart, and of scenes of great dramatic power. Wildenbruch reads history in the same way as the emperor; both are honest in their convictions. When the emperor gave to the poet the Schiller and afterwards the Grillparzer prize, crowning him as Germany's poet, it was because Wildenbruch is a man after William's own heart, because he best realizes the ideal goal of German poetry in the eyes of the emperor, who is said to have himself suggested subjects and plots for dramatization to the patriotic Major Lauff, whose name, however, could not be mentioned in the same class with Wildenbruch, and who is an ornament neither to German literature nor to the Royal Theater in Berlin. Emperor William is a man of brilliant qualities; his hand is felt in all departments of German life, he has raised the prestige of Germany, broadened her commercial activities, and modernized her educational life. His estimate of literature and art, however, evinces a singular lack of just appreciation. His one-sided policy has excluded some of the best products of the modern drama from the royal stage. To comprehend the spirit of the times, to rightly value the deep longings

of the German nation, it is necessary to supplement the study of dramatic art in the Royal Theater by a study of the plays presented on the people's stages, especially at the German Theater. The latter is an outcome of the Free Stage, established originally for a select gathering of literary men and artists to the exclusion of the public and police. It is from here that many plays of the two most conspicuous German authors of the day, Sudermann and Hauptmann, began their successful career over the stages of Germany.

Hermann Sudermann was born in a small East Prussian village, Natziken. His father, a brewer, was not blessed with this world's riches, and Hermann suffered from the restrictions imposed by scanty means. After a preparatory training in Elbing and Tilsit, he entered the University of Königsberg, and then, in 1877, the University of Berlin. The Prussian capital has been his main residence up to the present day. His first novel, "Dame Care," published in 1887, remains his best literary work. As Wildenbruch's art is most genuine in the portrayal of military circles, so it is with Sudermann's descriptions of the life with which he was in close touch up to his twentieth year. Characters and natural scenery are described in such vivid colors that the reader cannot doubt the inner truth of the descriptions. "Dame Care" is a masterpiece of German literature, a veritable contribution to the history of our modern civilization. Sudermann is like Wildenbruch in turning from what seemed to be his manifest vocation and making the drama his life work. His first drama, "Honor," established his reputation. With this drama he entered upon a path leading to honor and wealth. He had, indeed, been an acute observer of

Berlin society, and of the dark sides of metropolitan life. The conception of honor in German army life, its place in the military code of morals, has never been more ruthlessly exposed than in the play of this title. What is honor? The answer given by the drama is consistent with the moral convictions of a society which is destitute of any fine ethical sense. The drama shows in sharp contrast the opposing classes of German society based upon a false valuation of what constitutes real manhood and womanhood. In accordance with German custom, the rear house is the dwelling of the poor, the front house the residence of the rich. The rickety back stairs are climbed only by the servants of the front house for the purpose of conveying some message or of securing some service for the lordly inmates of the front house, living a free and easy life unhampered by sordid want. Poverty and destitution in one part, wealth and luxury in the other. The conflict between the two households is brought about by the high-minded love of the daughter of the wealthy manufacturer for young Heinecke, the son of the rear house (who, having been educated at the manufacturer's expense, manages the affairs of the business firm in India, and saving it from ruin, lays, by clever investment, the foundations for its rapidly increasing wealth), and by the base love of the manufacturer's son for the younger daughter of the rear house, ending in her ruin. A large sum of money paid in compensation for the damaged honor of the frivolous girl is gladly accepted by her parents. On his return from India, her brother with the aid of a rich friend, returns this money to his chief, and vainly demands that reparation be made to his sister by a legal marriage. His own union with the loyal daughter

of the front house, sneered at by the wealthy nabob, gains finally the latter's approval when the Count, Heinecke's just mentioned friend, who is the envied owner of large coffee plantations, declares him his partner and sole heir.

Aside from the improbable but not impossible Count, who, an army officer, left his country on account of gambling debts and amassed abroad an immense fortune, the characters in the play are such as may be met in any large city. The ruin of a girl of the lower strata of society, sad as it is in the eyes of justice, is unfortunately not so uncommon and not so severely condemned as it ought to be. The dispute arises about Sudermann's realistic answer to the question, What is honor? The girl who is ruined and her family rejoice in the rich compensation, her relatives praising and caressing her as a heroine; the man who accomplishes the dastardly deed is an officer of the reserve, and his parents only regret the expense of this stupid escapade; the enraged brother of the girl submits to the cold reasonings of his friend and benefactor, the Count, who voices the morality of a frivolous generation by elaborate discussion of the problem, which might be summed up in the conclusion, that everything is as it has to be. Honor is a phantom of little meaning, a coin of different value in different classes of society. The author's point of view might be stated in saying, Such is life. In a conversation I enjoyed with Hermann Sudermann regarding his critic Kawerau, the poet said, "I refuse to be judged by merely ethical standards." These words express Sudermann's artistic attitude. His aim is to present society as he sees it, without offering any solution for its problems. This is exactly what Sudermann's "*Honor*" is intended to do, and actually does.

When I returned from the play with a friend of mine, a sworn enemy of the socialistic and naturalistic tendencies in literature, and who, contending that we are surrounded by enough misery in life, had reluctantly accompanied me, I was pleased to hear from his lips that there is an extraordinary dramatic power in this drama, and that the applause, in which he had heartily joined, was justified. His criticism had been the universal verdict of Germany eleven years before, in 1889. Sudermann's play conquered Germany on account of its trueness to life and by the boldness with which the poet utters what everybody knows and what everybody thinks himself unable to counteract. For the illustration of ruling tendencies this first play of Sudermann's is sufficient. It gives his conception of the purpose of art, and furnishes the key to his other dramatic works (for example to "*Magda*" or "*Die Heimat*," played with great success in Paris by Sarah Bernhardt, and presented in English on several American stages). In his later plays, "*Johannes*" and "*The Three Heron Feathers*," the latter full of beautiful specimens of his lyrical ability, the poet aims at a more definite theory of life.

The third of the authors selected, Gerhart Hauptmann, is Germany's greatest living poet. Many literary critics and writers of our day would not indorse this statement, but some of the best do, and the coming generations will. Born on the 15th of November, 1862, he is the youngest of the trio; he has done much, and we are justified in expecting more, if conditions prove favorable. Hauptmann is a Silesian. His birthplace is the small watering-place, Obersalzbrunn, where his father was the proprietor of the chief hotel, the Prussian Crown. While Sudermann

seeks his inspiration in travel and society, Gerhart Hauptmann likes to return to his beloved native mountains and valleys, where he finds rest from the turmoil of the German capital, and incentive for renewed activity. His education has been somewhat irregular; his application to his regular studies and his record of attendance even at the Art School in Breslau is open to censure. A voyage on a cargo-steamer from Hamburg, in the spring of 1883, to Spain and the Mediterranean ports, and a subsequent stay in Rome, where he established an art studio, are of some importance for his development. His attempt as a sculptor proved a failure. After having married in 1885 he founded a home in the village of Erkner near Berlin. His literary bent of mind (which already had found dramatic embodiment in Breslau), stimulated by a circle of friends who believed themselves literary missionaries and reformers, and by the works of Tolstoy, Ibsen, and Zola, triumphed and determined the course of his life. Of the long list of dramas, which are proof not only of his restless activity, but also of a quickly growing literary independence, "The Weavers" is in some respects the most original gift of his poetical genius. A short analysis of the five acts will show the development of the drama.

The first act presents a large sombre room, the office of Mr. Dreisziger's factory, in the Silesian village Peterswaldau. The weavers deliver their finished work. For trifling reasons deductions are made in their wages, which are lamentably small at the best. The overbearing officials pay no attention to the lamentations of the oppressed laborers, whose long sufferings have deprived them of hope and courage. There is, however, one among them,

Bäcker, who, rising in anger and despair, becomes the spokesman of their just complaints. Calling his wages a shabby alms he praises in the hearing of the enraged manufacturer the "Song of the Bloody Doom." This song, alluded to here for the first time, forms an essential link in the drama, and is meant to play an important part in illustrating the rising spirit of revolt. Enraged at the mention of this song, which he had heard chanted one evening before his window, the manufacturer discharges Bäcker, who exclaims that it does not matter whether he dies at the loom or in the street. Thus the situation is clearly pictured, the exposition of the drama and its keynote are given. The latter is skilfully interwoven with the so-called initial impulse afforded by the fainting boy, who when aroused to consciousness, breathes forth the momentous words, "I am hungry."

The second act takes us into the house of one of the weavers in the near-by Kaschbach. The narrow, dingy room, the destitution and misery of the wretched home, verify the scenes of the first act, heightening the sympathetic interest of the spectator. The murmur of discontent becomes louder and louder, step by step we are nearing the inevitable climax. Moritz Jäger, the young soldier who has just completed his years of military service and who has returned home from the garrison with ten thalers in his pocket, meets in our hearts with a ready response, as he sounds the note of revolt by producing a copy of the "Song of the Bloody Doom." Reading it with passionate voice and gestures to his friends, he is applauded heartily, for the wild, stammering language seems exactly to picture their condition.—The third act is in the tavern. Wild threats of the sufferers mingle

with utterances of fear and indifference on the part of those whose living depends on the favor of the wealthy manufacturer. The voices of these few, however, grow fainter and fainter. There is no help for the poor weavers except self help. The dissatisfaction becomes universal. The arrogant and dishonest policeman is cowed by the robust and fearless blacksmith Wittich. The "Song of the Bloody Doom" is sung now in the tavern, the public assembly hall, then on the public highway, and becomes the battle-hymn of the infuriated masses.—The fourth act shows us the private appertiments of Dreisziger's house, the senseless luxury of his household, and the incomprehensible folly of its inmates, who are deaf to the voice of human sympathy. As the young theologian, the tutor of the children, dares to side with the laboring class, recommending charity, he is unceremoniously dismissed. The police called by Mr. Dreisziger to protect his property from the rebels, is powerless. Moritz Jäger is captured, but in a hand-to-hand fight is freed by his comrades. When we finally witness the destruction of the house and the flight of the family, our sympathies are with the poor rebellious weavers.—The fifth act introduces us to a weaver's family in the neighboring village, Langenbielau, whither, after their destructive work in Peterswaldau, the weavers directed their march. Old Father Hilse, as he is called, still believes in the divine order of all things, especially of the time-honored relation between employee and employer. He is patient and suffering in the hope of reward in the other world. In this faith he is willing to let the manufacturer have his good time here on earth. His aged spouse stands by him, also his son Gottlieb, but not the latter's wife.

The spirit of rebellion has infected even this pious home. Eager to avenge her four children, who one after another had died of starvation, she rushes out of the house to help the weavers fight the soldiers sent by the government. Gottlieb, carried away by the universal excitement, joins her and his comrades. The old man, struck by a bullet, falls dead over his loom, which he could not be persuaded to leave. The triumph of the weavers, among whom Bäcker, Jäger, and Wittich are conspicuous, and the retreat of the military forces form the closing scene of the act and of the drama.

The technic of the drama, its systematic and firmly jointed structure, is wonderful. This is so in spite of great innovations: firstly, there is no division into scenes; secondly, each act has a different set of *dramatis personæ*; thirdly, the drama has no hero in the dramatic sense. In addition to its novel form the play is written in dialect. There are two editions: the original (*Originalausgabe*) and the transformed (*Uebertragung*), the latter being the stage text. Both were published in the same year, probably in the same month—January, 1892. The mutual relation of the two publications and the motive for issuing them has been a matter of controversy. Gerhart Hauptmann told me that the transformed had been brought nearer to the High German (“*Die Uebertragung ist dem Hochdeutschen näher gebracht*”). My own observation is that both dialects exist in Silesia side by side, and that the dialect of the second edition is spoken by people who, living nearer cities, come into closer contact with the High German. By the retention of the weaver’s dialect the reality in the portrayal of their life is strengthened.

“The Weavers” is in the strictest sense a historical

drama. It deals with the revolt of the Silesian weavers in 1844. In dedicating his drama to his father, Hauptmann says: "What you used to tell me about grandfather, who, as a young man like those depicted, sat behind the loom, has become the germ of my poem." The poet evidently received impulse and inspiration from his father. This paternal information he supplemented and enlarged by consulting the reports and records of his own time and of the past. It has been emphasized that every incident in the drama can be verified by historical reference—even the song of the weavers. The reader of the drama feels that its persons are living characters; the spectator is conscious that the events he sees are not fictitious, but real, not creations of poetical fancy, but scenes from actual life. The poet did not mean to indorse a party platform by making himself the advocate of German social democracy. This fact is self-evident. The manufacturer and his clerks have been themselves poor weavers. We are even made to feel that most of the laborers, if put in the place of their employers, would act just like them; the oppressed would turn oppressors. No doubt the poet sincerely endeavored to be fair and just, and to avoid misrepresentation from personal bias. Nevertheless, Hauptmann's work, with its yearning for social betterment and a purer humanity, has rightly been claimed as being in perfect harmony with the aspirations of the better representatives of socialism. It is the creation of a man who in his innermost heart felt the unfathomable depth of the social woe. Various claims have been made for this unique drama. It is easy to uphold that there exists no historical play of equal faithfulness in the portrayal of history, and that there has never been on any stage a

better representation either of the workingman and of his ways of living, thinking, and speaking, or of the masses and of real human suffering. Hauptmann's play is a powerful sermon appealing to men to remedy the injustice of our social condition. It is a literary masterpiece taking first rank among the realistic productions of the day.

Like his colleague, Sudermann, Gerhart Hauptmann diagnoses modern social diseases with a physician's acuteness without offering a remedy; but though the phases are sometimes abnormal, his unbiased statement of the case arouses the expectation that so clear a recognition of symptoms will aid in finding the cure. This seems to be the poet's guiding motive. Though his earlier works are often intensely radical, none are distortions of truth.

In one of his later dramas he returns to his first love, but while "Ingeborg," the dramatic effusion of the youth of twenty, is inspired by the Frithjofssaga of the Swedish poet Tegner, "The Sunken Bell," which embodies the results of a lifelong study of early German history and mythology, is closely connected with the folk-lore of his beloved native mountains and valleys of Silesia. An explanation of this symbolic play, which since its publication, in 1896, has been constantly growing in favor with the German public, will not be attempted here.

"The Weavers" remains Hauptmann's greatest work. This estimate concerning "The Weavers" might, however, not find general indorsement. Personally I believe that "The Weavers" is destined to play a large part in the future evolution of Germany.

In the literature of the present world Germany has obtained again a leading position.

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